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ABSTRACT

Designed to explain how principals can shape school culture, this book first discusses current pressures for school reform and the different perspectives on school operations reflected in these reforms. Competing reform strategies are described, specifically, the human resources approach and the structural, political, free market, and school culture models. Aiming to link reform success to school culture and symbolic leadership concepts, the book describes organizational cultures or subcultures within the greater society and presents evidence connecting organizational culture to productivity in business and schools. Next, a description is given of how the principal shapes a school culture by fulfilling five roles: those of symbol, potter, poet, actor, and healer. Following this, the book presents five case studies of school leadership in school settings that varied according to principal incumbency, school characteristics, student abilities, and organizational history. Finally, commonalities in the leaders' tactics are summarized and discussed. Each of the principals described identified what was important, selected compatible teachers, dealt successfully with conflict, set a consistent example, told illustrative stories, and used ceremonies, tradition, rituals, and symbols to display the school's common values. The book concludes with some action guidelines, with the caveat that these will prove inadequate unless accompanied by an unquenchable desire and commitment to build cultures that support and create excellence. Included are 51 references and a classified, annotated bibliography of 25 books and articles. (MLH)

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The Principal's Role in Shaping School Culture

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U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement

The Principal's Role in Shaping School Culture

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September 1990

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Assistant Secretary's Preface to *The Principal's Role in Shaping School Culture*

Education reform had been sweeping the United States for the better part of a decade when, in 1990, it received a boost—the release by President Bush and the 50 Governors of national goals for American education. By the year 2000, they agreed, American children should begin school ready to learn; graduate from school at a rate of 90 percent; demonstrate competence in challenging subject matter and be prepared for citizenship; rise to first in the world in mathematics and science; attend safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools; and join the workforce as literate adults and responsible citizens.

To achieve these goals, we are going to need leadership in every school and community. We are going to need the combined efforts of parents, educators, policymakers, business leaders, and students themselves.

Rallying a school and community to the cause of improving student learning is part of the job of every school principal. Effective schools, we know from a wealth of research, are generally led by a principal who persuades faculty, parents, students, and others to commit themselves to high academic goals and educational excellence.

The degree to which a school is able to achieve excellence, according to recent research, is highly correlated with the degree to which that school operates autonomously—that is, independent of externally imposed rules and regulations. In other words, according to this study and other research, a school's autonomy or lack thereof is a key determinant of its success.

Yet many school leaders say that they have "insufficient authority" to manage their schools. Many of them consider that to be a major roadblock to reform. In a U.S. Department of Education-sponsored survey, 34 percent of participating principals indicated that "insufficient principal discretion over financial resources" was a moderate or serious obstacle to improving their school.

Lack of autonomy is more pronounced in urban schools, where, according to the survey, school districts generally exert unusually strong control over the policies of individual schools. It's not surprising, then, that 84 percent of urban principals say they want more authority in exchange for greater accountability for results.

Inadequate operational autonomy may be a barrier to educational excellence for many schools. It is an obstacle State policymakers are trying to reduce by offering to waive State regulations—if schools and principals are willing to be held accountable for results. There is evidence that this approach has succeeded in some instances. However, according to a recent study by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement's (OERI) Center for Policy Research in Education, few actually apply for such waivers (CPRE Policy Briefs #RB–05–5/90, "Decentralization and Policy Design"). Thus far, then, waiving regulations has not led to widespread autonomy in practice.

Aware of both the principals' need for more autonomy and policymakers' desire to provide it, the U.S. Department of Education is also aware of another emerging line of research relevant to these issues. This research indicates that, without formal regulatory or legislative action, principals already have at their disposal various levers for setting the tone and improving the performance of their schools.

We know, for instance, that effective principals generally have a "sixth sense" about the values and beliefs that shape their school community. They are able to tap into and harness those beliefs as a positive force for students. These principals nurture a sense of purpose and playfulness in the daily life of the school. Happily, research suggests that these abilities can be understood and learned.

That is what this book is about.

In ***The Principal's Role in Shaping School Culture,*** Terry Deal and Kent Peterson identify the strategies for effective principalship—strategies that are currently available to most school principals but are often underused. Deal and Peterson provide examples of

how principals can weave academic excellence into the fabric of school life. They describe steps that can be taken by *all* principals to build in their schools a lively, cooperative spirit and a sense of school identity.

In contrast to the more academic "research syntheses" that OERI has issued in the past, this book ventures into a realm where research has yet to provide definitive answers. It suggests a practical course of thought and action for principals seeking to assert bold leadership.

Such leadership is needed, as never before, in every school in America. The President and the Nation's Governors have expressed a willingness to give principals more flexibility in restructuring schools, in exchange for better results.

Whether such results will be achieved depends heavily on the creativity, imagination, and skills of principals.

That is why this book is so important. It offers school leaders a set of keys for unlocking the culture of their schools. I hope you enjoy it—and use it.

Christopher T. Cross
Assistant Secretary for Educational
Research and Improvement

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We must give special compliments to the subjects of the case studies for capturing the deeper aspects of the principal's role. We are indebted to the five principals who provided such exceptional examples of symbolic leadership in action, especially Hank Cotton who gave so much of his time and effort in helping develop his case.

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Introduction

Educational excellence has become part of the unique "feel," the inner reality and daily routine, of some American schools. *The Principal's Role in Shaping School Culture* was written to help principals make this happen in their own schools—by suggesting ideas and giving examples of the powerful but underemphasized role principals play as shapers of school culture.

The topic is timely. The President, the Governors, the business community, and the general public want schools to improve. As the President and Governors said following the September 1989 education summit, "Education has always been important, but never this important because the stakes have changed . . . ." In early 1990, the President and Governors released the country's first set of national goals for education. Achievement in four of the six goal areas—high school completion, student achievement, science and mathematics, and safe, disciplined, drug-free schools—are known to depend in good part on principals' leadership.

Implied in the national goals is increasingly more authority—and responsibility—for principals in reforming their schools. The problems involved in doing so are enormous. Success is unlikely unless reforms are linked meaningfully to the daily realities and deep structure of life in schools. This is more apt to occur when principals understand and reckon with the power of school culture.

The point of this book is to explain—and give examples—of how principals can shape the culture of schools.

Principals as culture shapers

It begins with an account of the current pressures for school reform and the different perspectives on school operations those reforms reflect. It links reform success to the concepts of school culture and symbolic leadership. It describes the cultures (or subcultures) of organizations within the greater society and the evidence that connects organizational culture to productivity—in businesses and in schools. The main part describes the role principals can play in shaping these cultures.

Five case studies The book then gives five case studies of school leaders—black and white, male and female—at five schools—public and private, elementary and secondary, poor and rich, urban, suburban, and rural—who were successful within their school situations.

Commonalities Finally, the book summarizes the commonalities in the tactics the leaders used. While they did not all achieve the highest levels of excellence, all made a significant difference. They focused the values and norms of their schools—as experienced in the daily lives of students, teachers, parents, and the concerned school community—on locally meaningful improvements in academic achievement.

The book concludes with some guidelines for action, ideas that are far easier to state than to implement. But even the best guidelines are inadequate unless accompanied by an unquenchable desire to make things better, an unwavering commitment to do what one must to change, and an unstoppable will to try and try again to build school cultures that support and create excellence.

The five principals who are the focus of this book taught one lesson above all others: the importance of modeling through one's own actions the values, beliefs, and normative behaviors on which cultures are founded. Our best advice is to view these exceptional school leaders as models and to learn from the desire, commitment, and skills that they displayed.

Pressures for School Reform

Will Rogers once observed, "Schools aren't as good as they used to be; they never were."

Nostalgia for the schools we remember, while important, may not produce the schools we need for the future. The desire to improve schools, and to have principals help in the process, is a prominent part of the American educational reform movement of the 1980s.

People believe we need better schools to secure an adequate future for students and society in the face of international challenges. State policymakers have enacted reform policies that create a new context in which local schools must operate. Parents and the public have hopes and expectations for higher performance.

Principals are on the firing line, contending with these expectations. But there exists no certain science that can tell them how to improve schools or whether current hopes can be realized.

All organizational change is difficult, and reforming education is no exception. Over 300 years ago, it was written of the school reform efforts of the day: "In spite of all the effort, they remain exactly the same as they were."[1] The frustrations of Comenius have been echoed ever since by those seeking to improve schools. The same difficulties may ensnare current reform efforts—and principals—unless we review our assumptions and strategies.

The purpose of this report is to provide school leaders insight into strategies for improving the schools for which they are responsible. Much has been written about effective schools, school improvement, and the principal as administrator and instructional leader.

This booklet portrays the same principal in another critical dimension—as a shaper of school culture. Principals can and do help create an ethos of respect, affection, and achievement every day by understanding the "subtext" of schooling—the implicit and explicit messages schools send to the members of their community.

The techniques outlined here center on this aspect of the principal's role.

Competing Approaches to School Reform

It is hard to improve schools significantly. Research has identified specific practices and programs that work, but there is no surefire science on how to combine them. Institutionalizing success for an entire school is complex. Intelligent and conscientious educators and policymakers often disagree with each other and among themselves about what should be done.

Choosing a reform strategy—consciously or unconsciously—involves a choice among a variety of ways of looking at schools. Each strategy has its own assumptions about how schools and people work and what can be done to make them work better.

- One approach, and its associated reforms, rooted in psychology, focuses on the skills and needs of educators—the human resources approach.
- A second approach, rooted in sociology, focuses on the formal structure and operation of schools.
- A third approach, rooted in political science, focuses on the political relations among powerful constituents of the school community.
- A fourth, from economics, focuses on market mechanisms of monopoly and school choice.
- This booklet seeks to bring attention to still another approach, this one tied to the concept of school culture, a concept originally rooted in anthropology.

While recognizing the powerful ways in which these other approaches operate, the concept of culture underlies and helps connect each of the other four.[2]

Human Resource Approach

Focuses on individual skills and needs. Assumes that people work best in organizations when their needs are met and they have competence to do what is expected and needed of them.

Problems arise when people don't know how to do a task. Staff may not, for example, know how to individualize instruction, how to teach an unfamiliar subject, or how to operate certain equipment.

Advocates the importance of reforms like teacher selection and training, staff development, and administrative renewal.

Structural Approach

Focuses on goals, roles, coordination, and control. Assumes that schools work best when goals are clear, daily activities have concrete objectives, roles are well defined, and individual efforts are linked through authority, policies, rules, and well-organized meetings.

Problems arise when goals are ambiguous, structures are not appropriate, communication breaks down, or schools are not held accountable for results.

Advocates the importance of reforms like restructuring schools, measuring and reporting performance, linking evaluations to formal rewards, encouraging teachers and students to spend time "on task," and lengthening the school day or year.

Political Approach

Focuses on power, conflict, interest groups, bargaining, and coalitions. Assumes that good school functioning depends on forming working coalitions around school purposes and practices.

Problems arise when interest groups advocate competing educational priorities and cannot resolve their differences.

Advocates creating pro-education coalitions, empowering passive or disenfranchised constituents, and confronting and resolving conflicts among members of the school community.

Free Market Economic Approach

Focuses on market mechanisms to introduce competition for student enrollment among schools. Assumes that leaders and staff within a school will work harder to supply good service and services tailored to local

needs if parents and students can select which school to attend.

Problems arise when the neighborhood school is a monopoly whose budget and staff are not affected by the quality of the school's performance.

Advocates choice, vouchers, and open enrollment.

School Culture or Ethos Approach

Focuses on behavioral patterns, and the values, beliefs, and norms that define and sustain those patterns. Assumes that teachers and students are strongly influenced by the morale, mores, routines, and conscious and unconscious conventions about how things are done in their schools.

Problems arise when undesirable or ineffective practices become conventionalized within a school.

Advocates efforts and leadership to reshape school culture—ideas advocated within this paper.

All of these images and strategies of school reform have merit. Individually and in the aggregate, the ideas and assumptions behind the various reforms make sense. Problems arise, though, when we try to introduce changes, or any new idea, into an existing organization. Bureaucratically implementing a reform policy can become a superficial exercise in compliance that never disturbs the underlying operations of schools. Genuine improvement may be elusive unless we can begin to surface and reconcile the divergent views of reform outlined above.

School Culture and the Cultures of Organizations

Principals know from experience that piecemeal reforms, reforms which ignore the inner realities of schools, will have limited effect. They understand by instinct that to build a successful school one must work simultaneously on staff needs and skills, the organization's goals and roles, and the dynamics of political power and conflict.

Beyond that, there is something else about a school—something beyond staff skills, goals, roles, power, and conflict—that is vital to performance and improvement. It is hard to define this something, to put your finger on it, but it is extremely powerful, often neglected, and usually absent from our discussions or assumptions of how to improve schools.

Each school has its own character or "feel." You can sense it as you approach the building. You can almost smell and taste it as you walk through the doors. You can see it in the pictures on the walls and the students in the halls. You can hear it in exchanges between students and teachers in the classroom and in students' talk with one another on the playground.

For many years the terms "climate" or "ethos" have been used to try to capture this powerful yet elusive force. In this report we call it ***school culture***.

The concept of culture is meant to describe the character of a school as it reflects deep patterns of values, beliefs, and traditions that have been formed over the course of its history. Beneath the conscious awareness of everyday life in any organization there is a stream of thought, sentiment, and activity.

This invisible, taken-for-granted flow of beliefs and assumptions gives meaning to what people say and do. It shapes how they interpret hundreds of daily transactions. This deeper structure of life in organizations is reflected and transmitted through symbolic language and expressive action. Culture consists of the stable, underlying social meanings that shape beliefs and behavior over time.

Anthropologists first developed the concept of culture to explain differences among the entire life patterns of tribes, societies, and national groupings. Later, other social scientists applied the concept to the more limited aspects of life within organizations in a larger society. Organizations usually have distinguishable identities manifested in organizational members' patterns of behavior. The concept of culture helps us to understand these patterns—what they are, how they came to be, and how they affect organizational performance.

There are no universally accepted definitions of culture. One scholar defines culture as the web of significance in which we are all suspended.[3] Another defines it as "the way we do things around here."[4] Others define it as the shared beliefs and values that knit a community together.[5] Another defines it as

> *a pattern of basic assumptions—invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems . . . —that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.*[6]

Schools, like many other organizations, have their own unique cultures. One early scholar observed:

> *Schools have a culture that is definitely their own. There are, in the school, complex rituals of personal relationships, a set of folkways, mores, and irrational sanctions, a moral code based upon them. There are games, which are sublimated wars, teams, and an elaborate set of ceremonies concerning them. There are traditions, and traditionalists waging their world-old battle against innovators.*[7]

Culture is a historically rooted, socially transmitted set of deep patterns of thinking and ways of acting that give meaning to human experience, that unconsciously dictate how experience is seen, assessed and acted on. Culture is a concept that helps us perceive and understand the complex forces that work below the surface and are in the air of human groups and organizations.

Much research, across many different types of organizations—including schools—shows that institutions work best when people are committed to certain commonly held values and are bonded to one another and to the organization by means of key symbols.

By articulating such values and by using appropriate and effective symbols—identifying "heroic" individuals, celebrating milestone events and accomplishments, and engaging in various expressive activities—principals can encourage strong school cultures that focus upon improving education.

Similarly, the neglect of such activities can ultimately unravel the coherence suggested by the term "culture." Reductions in cooperation, productivity, commitment, and motivation may be the result of many factors, including an inability to create, maintain, and reinforce symbols and symbolic activity.

Culture and Productivity

The culture of an organization can influence its productivity, and there is reason to believe that the same cultural dimensions that account for high performance in business account for high achievement in schools. The current interest in organizations stems partially from work linking culture to business productivity, spurred largely by increasingly effective competition from Japan and other Asian nations.

In the bestselling book *Theory Z*, William Ouchi argues that differences in culture explained in large part why Japanese corporations were outproducing their American counterparts.[8] Similar points were made in the best-seller *Corporate Cultures* by Terrence Deal and Alan Kennedy,[9] and by Tom Peters and Robert H. Waterman in what became the most popular business book of all time, *In Search of Excellence*.[10]

All of these books point out that a distinguishing characteristic of top-performing companies is a strong identity, forged over time, consistent with the demands of the business environment and the human needs of organization members. They suggest that productivity is related to the "culture" of the organization.

Similar observations relating to school cultures have been made within the "effective schools" research literature. Studies of successful schools identify certain cultural characteristics as common to these schools. Effective schools researchers report that "ethos,"[11] "teamness,"[12] and school culture[13] were important factors in achieving high test scores.

Specifically, successful schools share—

- Strong values that support a safe and secure environment, one that is conducive to learning and is free of disciplinary problems or vandalism;
- High expectations of every student and of faculty, too, believing that everyone can achieve;
- Belief in the importance of basic skills instruction as a key and critical goal for all students;
- The belief that there should be clear performance goals and that everyone should have clear and helpful performance feedback to help in guiding the learning and improvement process; and
- Strong leadership and a belief in its importance.

One study comparing high-achieving schools (as reflected in the effective schools literature) and high performing companies[14] identifies the cultural dimensions of each as follows:

Parallels Between Effective Schools and Organizations

Effective schools	Effective organizations
Coherent ethos with agreed-upon ways of doing things; agreement on instructional goals	Strong culture with shared ways and values and a consensus on "how we do things around here"
Importance of principal as leader	Importance of leader as hero or heroine who embodies core value, or who anoints other heroic figures
Strong beliefs about teaching and learning	Widely shared beliefs about the organization's mission
Teachers as role models; students with positions of responsibility	Employees as situational heroes or heroines who represent core values
Ceremonies, traditions, and rituals centered on events such as arrival in the morning, the first day of school, and graduation	Ceremonies, traditions, and rituals centered on events such as greeting employees in the morning, opening a new plant, and the retirement of a senior executive.
Orderly atmosphere without rigidity, accountability without oppression	Balance between innovation and tradition, autonomy and authority
Teachers involved in technical decisionmaking	Employee participation in decisions about their own work

We also know that school improvement strategies are more effective when there is a clear school mission around which to rally support and focus change. In such cultures, teachers value the interchange of ideas with colleagues, finding ways to hone their skills incrementally or to shape their programs toward achieving the larger mission of their school.

We need further, systematic information on how and under what conditions school culture can influence performance outcomes. Even so, what we know now strongly suggests that school culture is linked to productivity in terms of student test scores, teacher morale, turnover, motivation, collegiality, and even public confidence and support. For all of these reasons, principals must understand and be able to affect school culture if they are to lead effective schools.

Leadership and Culture

Leadership is a slippery concept. It is typically thought to reside in formal leaders who, by virtue of special traits, charisma, or dynamic action as well as prescribed authority, affect the sentiments and behaviors of followers. But leaders (those holding formal positions in a formal hierarchy) and leadership are not always the same. As one French essayist noted: "Of course, I follow them; I'm their leader."[15]

In schools, the principal is expected to exercise a formal leadership role, though others increasingly share the responsibility and its ambiguities. Some have likened the experience of leadership to that of controlling a skidding automobile.

> *"[T]he marginal judgments [a leader] makes, his skill, and his luck may possibly make some difference for his riders. As a result, his responsibilities are heavy. But whether he is convicted of manslaughter or receives a medal for heroism is largely outside his control."* [16]

And, as we shall see, it is the important, informal aspects of their symbolic authority that often enable principals to exercise influence effectively.

Leadership and culture are both complex concepts. The precise boundaries between them are difficult to discern. Leadership shapes culture, and culture shapes leaders. Errors can be made in underestimating *or* overestimating the power or breadth of influence of either.

Nonetheless, one of the most significant roles of leaders (and of leadership) is the creation, encouragement, and refinement of the symbols and symbolic activity that give meaning to the organization. One sociologist of business organizations points out that the effectiveness of a leader is in the ability to make actions meaningful to others.[17]

An organizational psychologist states the case for cultural leadership even more forcefully. He says

> *there is a possibility, underemphasized in leadership research, that the only thing of real importance that leaders do is to create and manage culture and that the unique talent of leaders is their ability to work with culture.*[18]

Culture is a powerful force. Trying to shape it, change it, or fight it can have serious repercussions. Principals who consciously try to influence or shape the culture of a school must be aware that there are pitfalls as well as positive outcomes. Such attempts may backfire.

Example:

> **During spring vacation a principal decided on her own to throw out the old textbooks, workbooks, and miscellaneous memorabilia housed in an upstairs storeroom. The teachers had complained chronically about all "that junk." They had requested a teacher's workroom, a place for teachers to meet together and discuss instruction. So, the principal decided to make it a holiday surprise. She and her husband cleaned, painted, and furnished the old storeroom, making it over into an attractive teacher's workroom. When the teachers returned after the spring break, they filed a**

grievance. The principal had, in their eyes, thrown away the "heritage" of the school. The principal disastrously misread the importance of the cultural artifacts that teachers lovingly referred to as "that junk."[19]

A school's culture has been created well before most principals arrive; it will exist long after most leave. Only a few principals may have the opportunity to start afresh in a brand-new school, but even then the new teachers and students will carry cultural imprints from their previous place—as will the principal.

Most principals must work with a cultural tapestry that is already woven. They must somehow reinforce thin spots or tears, shape it to cover different or changed surfaces, or even try to reverse the fabric without unraveling the shared meaning. There is a delicate balance between a principal's doing nothing and doing harm. The Chinese call this balance *wei-wu*, the place between inaction and undue force. This balance is at the center of effective symbolic leadership and cultural change.

Existing Culture

The interplay between a principal's values and the existing culture is complex. Principals are often told that cultural leadership is the art of fusing a personal vision with a school that needs direction. This requires ***both*** a principal who knows what he or she wants ***and*** a community of faculty, parents, students, and staff who believe they need a new direction to solve existing problems.

If the school culture already gives meaning to the routines of teachers, students, parents, and staff, they see no need for a new direction. But under some conditions, a new vision can be renegotiated throughout the school community, thereby providing a different direction for the school.

Some school cultures are ***weak***; some strong ones may be ***negative***. In some schools, teachers hold low expectations and classroom routines bore children to death. School staff may complain bitterly and work to undermine each other. Parents may be overwhelmed by

issues of economic and personal survival, and students may be more focused on drugs and life on the street than on books and classrooms.

People can become as attached to mediocrity, negative symbols, and harmful rituals as they can to positive heroes, symbols of achievement, or celebratory rituals. For some, negative meaning is better than no meaning at all.

School culture is created through the experience and interplay of many people, a dialectic among all the key players in a school, of which the principal is only one. Principals must attend to the trial and error, action and reaction through which the school's culture will evolve. To exert a significant influence, the principal must sometimes accept events being "out of control" and allow experience itself to transform the shared meaning given to school activities.

But, under other conditions, particularly when a school is weak or in tatters, a principal can play a decisive leadership role in reshaping the school culture.

Sizing Up the Situation

Key Questions for Symbolic Leaders

A principal, consciously or unconsciously, is always alert to **read** the school culture, and to decide whether and how to try to **shape** it. Principals approaching a new school—or trying to understand their own—should ask themselves three basic questions:

- What is the culture of the school now—its history, values, traditions, assumptions, beliefs, and ways?
- Where it matches my conception of a "good" school, what can I do to strengthen existing patterns?
- Where I see a need for new direction, what can be done to change or reshape the culture?

Reading the Current School Culture

This section will present some practical steps many principals take to read and shape the cultures of their respective schools. In doing so we both borrow anthropological language of symbols, rituals, and ceremonies and coin our own metaphors for the principal's role as potter, poet, actor, and healer.

In each instance our purpose is to remind school leaders of the formidable nature of their unofficial power to reshape school culture toward an "ethos of excellence" and make quality an authentic part of the daily routine of school life.

A principal must understand his or her school—its patterns, the purposes they serve, and how they came to be. Changing something you do not understand is a surefire recipe for stress—and ultimate failure. A principal must inquire below the surface of what is happening to formulate a deeper explanation of what is really going on. To be effective, principals must **read** their school and community culture.

Reading culture takes several forms: watching, sensing, listening, interpreting, using all of one's senses, and

even employing intuition when necessary. First, the leader must listen to the echoes of school history.

The process of constructing an "organizational genealogy" or family tree is one of the best strategies of coming to know the personality—or culture—of a school. A principal can reconstruct the history through listening, watching, interviewing, and examining artifacts and records.

A more active re-creation of a school's history through group storytelling is both instructive and helpful in connecting a school with its ancestral roots.

Example:

> **One school focused an in-service day on the history of the school. The faculty was assigned to two groups on the basis of their tenure. Both old-timers and newcomers were assigned the task of remembering events and heroes and retelling memorable stories. As each group reported, the history of the school came to life. Emotionally powerful for all the participants, the event re-presented a mosaic of the school culture.**[20]

The Informal Network

A principal must also listen to the key voices of the present. These people may be thought of as cultural "players" in various dramas at the school. [21] Experienced principals will recognize the cast of characters. They include:

- Priests and priestesses—long-time residents who "minister" to the needs of the school. They take confession, preside over rituals and ceremonies, and link the school to the ways of the past;
- Storytellers—recreate the past and personify contemporary exploits through lore and informal history;
- Gossips—keep everyone current on contemporary matters of importance, as well as trivia of no special merit. They form the informal

grapevine that carries information far ahead of formal channels of communication; and

- Spies, counterspies, and moles—carry on subterranean negotiations which keep informal checks and balances among various power centers in the school. Through such covert operations, much of the work of the school is transacted.

Each of these sources—and others—is an informant on the present as well as the past. Far below the level of rational discourse and public conversation, the informal network provides a regular update on the current culture of the school.

The Past as Key to the Future

Most important, the leader must listen for the deeper dreams and hopes the school community holds for the future. Every school is a repository of unconscious sentiments and expectations that carry the code of the collective dream—the high ground to which they aspire.

This represents emerging energy the principal can tap and a deep belief system to which he or she can appeal when articulating what the school might become.

A principal can get an initial reading of a school by asking these key questions about the founding, traditions, building, current realities, and future dreams of the school:

- How long has the school existed?
- Why was it built, and who were the first inhabitants?
- Who had a major influence on the school's direction?
- What critical incidents occurred in the past, and how were they resolved, if at all?
- What were the preceding principals, teachers, and students like?
- What does the school's architecture convey? How is space arranged and used?
- What subcultures exist inside and outside the school?

- Who are the recognized (and unrecognized) heroes and villains of the school?
- What do people say (and think) when asked what the school stands for? What would they miss if they left?
- What events are assigned special importance?
- How is conflict typically defined? How is it handled?
- What are the key ceremonies and stories of the school?
- What do people wish for? Are there patterns to their individual dreams?

Shaping a School Culture

When principals have reflected to the point they feel they understand a school's culture, they can evaluate the need to **shape** or reinforce it. Valuable aspects of the school's existing culture can be reinforced; problematic ones require revitalizing. Shaping the culture is **not** an exact science. Shaping a culture is indirect, intuitive, and largely unconscious.

This section is to help principals identify the cultural dimensions of their job and concrete things they can do, in concert with others, to shape school culture.

1. The principal as *symbol*:	affirm values through dress, behavior, attention, routines.
2. The principal as *potter*:	shape and be shaped by the school's heroes, rituals, ceremonies, symbols.
3. The principal as *poet*:	use language to reinforce values and sustain the school's best image of itself.
4. The principal as *actor*:	improvise in the school's inevitable dramas.
5. The principal as *healer*:	oversee transitions and change in the life of the school.

The Principal as Symbol

Everyone watches a new principal. His or her selection is a symbolic event, indicating to the school community where the culture is and where it might be headed. Age, gender, philosophy, reputation, demeanor, and other characteristics are important signals that will be read by members of the culture in a variety of ways.

Who a principal is—what he or she does, attends to, or seems to appreciate—is constantly watched by students, teachers, parents, and members of the community.

How a principal listens to and reads the school's existing culture communicates an interest, concern, or disdain for existing traditions. All that the principal does, says, and reacts to signals the values he or she holds. Above all else, a principal is a teacher in the best sense of the word.

Like other managers, principals engage in an enormous number of very routine actions. Maintaining the school building, budget, staff, discipline, and schedule takes up time. But these seemingly routine actions can be transformed into more meaningful symbolic events that reinforce the basic values and purposes of the school.

We rarely "see" an action's symbolic value at the time it occurs. More often we realize it later, if at all. For example, the "building tour" that many principals take in the morning may be simply a walk through the building to investigate potential trouble spots or building maintenance problems. In some schools, the teachers and students see the same walk as a ritual demonstrating that the principal cares and is involved in the learning environment.

Routine tasks are most likely to take on symbolic meaning when the principal shows sincere personal concern for core values and purposes while performing them. A classroom visit, building tour, or staff meeting may be nothing more than the technical observation of a routine activity, or, it may be a symbolic expression of the deeper values the principal holds for the school.

Almost all actions of the principal can have symbolic content when a school community understands their connection to its shared values.

Seemingly innocuous actions send signals as to what the principal values. The community may see a signal in any of the following arrangements or behaviors of the principal:

The Office

Its location, accessibility, decoration, and arrangement reflect the principal's values. One principal works from her couch in an office in the school's entryway; another is hidden in a corner suite behind a watchful

secretary. One principal decorates with students' work on the office walls; others with athletic trophies, public service awards, posters of favorite works of art, or photographs of the family. These social artifacts signal to others what is considered important.

Demeanor

What car the principal drives, his or her clothes, posture, gestures, facial expression, sense of humor, and personal idiosyncrasies send signals of formality or informality, approachability or distance, concern or unconcern. A wink following a reprimand can have as much effect on a child as the verbal reprimand itself. A frown, a smile, a grimace, or a blank stare—each may have a potent affect.

Time

How principals spend their time and what they focus their attention on send strong signals about their values. The community quickly discerns discrepancies between espoused values and actual values indicated by what issues receive time and attention.[22] The appointment book and daily routines signal what a principal values.

Appreciation

Principals signal their appreciation formally through official evaluations and public recognition and rewards. Informally, their daily behavior and demeanor communicate their preference in quality teaching, admirable behavior, and desired cultural traditions. Teachers and students are particularly attentive to the values displayed and rewarded by the principal in moments of social or organizational crisis within the school.

Writing

The form, emphasis, and volume of memos and newsletters communicate as strong a signal from the principal as what he or she writes in them. Memos may be a source of inspiration, a celebration of success, or a collection of bureaucratic jargon, rules, and regulations. Even the appearance of written material will be noticed, from the informality of the blue smudge of the mimeograph to the care evidenced by the new typewriter ribbon. Pride, humor, affection, and fatigue displayed in writing send signals about what a principal values.

Taken together, all these aspects of the principal's behavior, conscious and unconscious, form a public persona

which carries symbolic meaning. They come with the territory of being a principal and help to shape the culture of the school.

The Principal as Potter

A principal may try to shape the elements of school culture (its values, ceremonies, and symbols) the way a potter shapes clay—patiently and with much skill.[23]

In doing so, he or she articulates the shared values, celebrates school heroes or heroines, observes rituals and ceremonies, and nurtures important school symbols.

Articulating Shared Values

It often falls to the principal, formally and informally, to articulate the philosophy that embodies what the school stands for. A valuable service is rendered if the principal can express those values in a form that makes them memorable and easily grasped.

In one district, the values are crystallized in the simple, single phrase; "Every child a promise."[24] Another school district developed the motto: "A commitment to People. We care. A commitment to Excellence. We dare. A commitment to Partnership. We share."[25] Again, to ring "true," mottos must reflect the actual practices and beliefs of the school.

In other schools, symbols function like slogans. One middle school's values are embodied in the symbol of a frog. The frog reflects the school's commitment to caring and affection that makes all children "princes and princesses."[26]

Celebrating School Heroes and Heroines

There are important individuals in most schools, past and present, who exemplify the values of the school. Heroes and heroines, living and dead, personify values and serve as role models for others. Students, teachers, parents, and custodians may qualify for special status through words or deeds.

Like stories about Paul Bunyan or Charles Lindbergh, the stories of these local heroes motivate and teach the ways of the culture. When they exemplify qualities a principal wants to reinforce, he may recognize these individuals publicly. Schools can commemorate teachers or administrators in pictures,

plaques, or special ceremonies just as businesses, hospitals, or military units do.

Observing Rituals

The school principal can shape the culture by participating in and encouraging the rituals that celebrate important values. Everyday tasks take on added significance when they symbolize values. School activities may become "rituals" when they express shared values and bind people in a common experience. These rituals are stylized, repeated behavior that reinforces shared values and beliefs.

Example:

> **A new superintendent of schools opened his first district-wide convocation by lighting a small lamp, which he labeled the "lamp of learning." After the event, no one mentioned the lamp. The next year, prior to the convocation, several people inquired: "You are going to light the lamp of learning again, aren't you?" The lighting of the lamp had been accepted as a symbolically meaningful ritual.** [27]

Rituals take various forms. Some rituals are social and others center around work. Americans shake hands, Italians hug, and French kiss both cheeks when greeting or parting. Surgical teams scrub for 7 minutes, although germs are destroyed by modern germicides in 30 seconds. Members of the British artillery, when firing a cannon, still feature an individual who holds his hand in a position that once kept the horse from bolting because "that's the way it has always been done."

Meetings, parties, informal lunches, and school openings or closings provide opportunity for rituals. Fraternities often close meetings with an open opportunity for anyone to share anything of importance. In this setting, issues can be aired, accomplishments recognized, disagreements expressed, or exploits retold. These rituals bind people to each other—and to the deeper values of the organization.

Observing Ceremonies

School ceremonies allow us to put cultural values on display, to retell important stories, and to recognize the

exploits and accomplishments of important individuals. These special events tie past, present, and future together. They intensify the social commitment to the organization and revitalize individuals for challenges that lie ahead.

When a ceremony is held, a special place, a special touch, and a special rhythm and flow may build momentum and express sincere emotions. Planning and staging these events are often done with extreme care. Encouraging and orchestrating such special ceremonies provide another opportunity for principals to shape—and be shaped by—the culture of the school.

Example:

One group of parents—with input from the high school principal—planned a celebration for the school's teachers. They decorated the cafeteria, using white tablecloths and silver candle holders. They went to the superintendent and asked permission to serve wine and cheese and arranged for a piano bar where teachers and parents could sing together. Each teacher was given a corsage or a ribbon. The supper was potluck, supplied by the parents. After dinner, the school choir sang. Several speakers called attention to the significance of the event. The finale came as the principal recognized the parents and asked everyone to join her in a standing ovation for the teachers. The event was moving for both the teachers and the parents, and has become a part of the school's tradition.[28]

The Principal as Poet

We should not forget the straightforward and subtle ways that principals communicate with language—from memos to mottos to sagas and stories and informal conversation.

The words and images and sincerity principals use to talk about the school or students convey sentiments as

well as ideas. "The achievement scores of *my* school are above the norm" conveys a very different image then "*Our* school is a special place to be."

Acronyms can separate insiders from outsiders to the school community. PSAT, CTBS, or NAEP may carry different meaning to educators than to their publics. Idioms and slogans ("Every child a promise" or "We Care; We Dare; We Share") may condense shared understandings of a school's values. However, hypocrisy in such slogans can alienate those who hear it. Consider the principal in the satirical book *Up the Down Staircase* who would say, "Let it be a challenge to you" in the face of problems that were obviously impossible to solve.[29]

Metaphors may provide "picture words" that consolidate complex ideas into a single, understandable whole. Whether students and teachers think of a school as a factory or a family will have powerful implications for day-to-day behavior.

One of the highest forms of "principal talk" is the story. A well-chosen story provides a powerful image that addresses a question without compromising its complexity. Stories ground complicated ideas in concrete terms, personifying them in flesh and blood. Stories carry values and connect abstract ideas with sentiment, emotions, and events.

Stories told by or about leaders help followers know what is expected of them. They emphasize what is valued, watched, and rewarded for old-timers and greenhorns alike.

Example:

> **The parents of a third grade student informed the principal that they were planning to move into a new house at Christmas and would therefore be changing schools. He suggested they tell the teacher themselves, since she took a strong personal interest in each of her students. They returned later with the surprising announcement that they were postponing**

their move. The principal asked why. The mother replied, "When we told Mrs. Onfrey about our decision she told us we couldn't transfer our child from her class. She told us that she wasn't finished with him yet."[30]

By repeating such stories, principals reinforce values and beliefs and so shape the culture of the school. "Sagas," stories of unique accomplishment, rooted in history and held in sentiment by the whole school community, can define the core values of a school to its members. They can convey to the outside world an "intense sense of the unique" that captures imagination, engenders loyalty, and secures resources and support from outsiders.[31]

The Principal as Actor

Cultures are often characterized as theater, the stage on which important events are acted out. If "all the world's a stage," then aspects of the life of a school are fascinating soap operas. Technically they have been called "social dramas."[32]

Much of this drama occurs during routine activities of the school. Periodic ceremonies, staged and carefully orchestrated, provide intensified, yet predictable theater. The outcome is usually known in advance (of graduation or an assembly), but both the players and the spectators are caught up in the spirit of the play.

There are also moments of unpredictable drama in any organization. In crises, or critical incidents (like a student suicide or the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger) are moments of unforeseen school drama.

A critical incident like a school closing provides the principal a significant opportunity to act in a social drama that can reaffirm or redirect cultural values and beliefs.

Example:

A principal was concerned about the effect of a school merger on the students and the community. He convened a transition committee to plan, among other things, a

> **ceremony for the last day of school. On that day, the closing school was wrapped in a large red ribbon and filmed by a helicopter. When wreckers had demolished the building, each student, teacher, parent, and observer was given one of the bricks tied with a red ribbon and an aerial photograph of the school tied with a red bow.**[33]

Such drama provides a heightened opportunity to mark a historical transition and reaffirm cultural ties within the school community. Rather than inhibiting or stifling such dramas, the principal may seize them as an opportunity to resolve differences and redirect the school.

Social dramas can be improvisational theater with powerful possibilities to reaffirm or alter values. In a political sense, such events as faculty or student conflicts are arenas—with referees, rounds, rules, spectators, fighters, and seconds. In the arena, conflicts are surfaced and decided, rather than lingering and seething because they have been avoided or ignored.

Critical incidents, from this perspective, provide the principal a significant opportunity to participate in a social drama that can reaffirm or redirect the values and beliefs of the school.

The Principal as Healer

Most school cultures are stable, but not static, and changes do occur. The principal can play a key role in acknowledging these transitions, healing whatever stress they create, and helping the school adapt to change in terms of its traditions and culture.

Schools celebrate the natural transitions of the year. Every school year has a beginning and an end. Beginnings are marked by convocations to end the summer and outline the vision and hopes for the coming year. Endings are marked by graduations, which usually unite members in a common celebration of the school culture.

The observation of national and seasonal holidays, from Halloween to President's Day, may make the school

an important cultural center for events in the local community and reaffirm the school's ties to the wider culture. One school convenes a schoolwide festival each fall, winter, and spring, at which they demonstrate the way the students' religions honor a particular holiday.[34] Because of the diversity among students, such festivals provide an opportunity for students to learn different customs and foods. Such observances create a schoolwide unity around differences that could otherwise become divisive.

The beginning and end of employment are episodic transitions that a principal may use to reaffirm the school's culture and its values. What newcomers must learn about the school is a good definition of what is important in its culture.

Retirement marks the end of a career and the loss of a member of the school community. A retirement ceremony reviews and commemorates the contributions of the individual and also the ongoing traditions of the school. Both the retiree and the school need to crystallize what the person meant and the legacy they leave behind.

Even transfers, reductions in force, terminations, and firings-for-cause are transitions that can be marked by cultural events. In one Massachusetts elementary school, primary students named hallways after teachers who had been let go in the wake of a taxpayer rebellion that required tremendous cost reductions in nearly every school in the State.[35]

Unpredictable, calamitous events in the life of the school, like a death or school closing, will be upsetting to all members of the school community. These transitions require recognition of pain, emotional comfort, and hope. Unless transitions are acknowledged in cultural events, loss and grief will accumulate.

Example:

At one school closing, all the students, teachers, alumni, and the principal joined the mayor and other dignitaries in a parade from the old schoolhouse to the

new. The parade was launched ceremonially from the old school with speeches and stories. The parade was accompanied by firetrucks and marching bands. At the receiving school, the children were met by their new classmates and teachers. The principal of the old school passed his symbolic authority to the principal of the new school.[36]

The principal as healer recognizes the pain of transitions and arranges events that make the transition a collective experience. Drawing people together to mourn loss and to renew hope is a significant part of the principal's culture-shaping role.

School Subcultures and the Wider Community

Subcultures will always exist within the culture of the school. Student subcultures form around neighborhoods, interests, gender, class, and race. Among students, subcultural differences are often the basis for arguments and fights.

For teachers, subcultures form around grade levels, departments, length of tenure, race, and sex. Teachers may define themselves in terms of their profession, association, or union. There is always some tension between a teacher's loyalty to the profession and to the school.

There can be tension among the subcultures of the school. Tensions between the subcultures of teachers and administrators may be expressed as disputes about professional autonomy and systemwide coordination. Tensions between students and teachers may be more graphically expressed. "No more pencils, no more books, no more teachers' dirty looks" is a piece of year-end student lore that has survived through generations.

A successful principal recognizes these differences among the various subcultures of the school but can, at the same time, articulate the shared values that bind them. This in turn binds various subcultures to the school as a whole.

An ongoing dialogue with the local community and responsibility to the local superintendent has long been a vital part of the principal's role. Increasingly, however, the principal must *also* implement new State policy directives. These policies, in turn, may reflect national concerns about America's relative position in the world economy. Effective principals identify how these new policies can reinforce existing school values and take on meaning in terms of local hopes and dreams.

It is the principal who casts the expectations of the larger community in terms of the unique flavor and traditions of the school. The school culture and the principal's leadership either encourage the school–community dialogue—or dramatically cut the school off from its community roots. The principal's roles as listener,

symbol, potter, poet, actor, and healer must also extend to the greater community.

Symbolic Leadership and School Context

Symbolic leadership is more an art form than an exact science. Actions that might otherwise be only individually, technically, or politically inspired can take on much greater meaning. At the core of symbolic leadership is the importance of understanding the culture of a particular school—where it has been, where it is, and where it wants to go.

Principals who are successful as symbolic leaders can infuse daily routines with symbolic value to the school community. Their office, demeanor, and behavior send signals about school values. The ceremonies and rituals they emphasize, and the language they use to discuss them can have an influence in shaping the culture of the school.

But much of what happens in a school is not directly within the principal's control. This requires the symbolic leader to join the troupe of the school community's improvisational actors and actresses.

Principals who enjoy the security of control will find discomfort in the ambiguity and unpredictability of improvisational theater. But a symbolic leader will, if necessary, learn the merits of improvising in a comfortable way.

Even further outside a principal's control are the powerful reform pressures for schools to change. Whether changes are inspired at the national, State, district, or school level, the principal must either assume the role of healer or encourage the healing process. Otherwise, efforts to improve schools may actually scar the cultural system that gives meaning to the enterprise.

School Culture and Symbolic Leadership

We believe that the more principals understand about school culture and their roles in shaping it, the better equipped they will be to avoid the common pitfalls of change and reform. Culture involves all dimensions of life in schools. It determines individual needs and out-

looks, shapes formal structures, defines the distribution of power, and establishes the means by which conflicts are dealt with. Understanding the specific culture of a school helps principals make external reforms locally meaningful.

As principals become more sensitive symbolic leaders, they must not ignore their other important leadership roles, those of counselor (meeting needs and helping to build skills), administrator of a formal structure (adjusting goals and roles), and arbitrator (creating arenas in which to resolve the normal conflicts in a school). Symbolic leadership goes hand in hand with these other aspects of school leadership.

Case Studies

In any of these symbolic leadership roles—symbol, potter, poet, actor, or healer—the context of the individual school will define, shape, contain, or reinforce the principal. Symbolic leadership always occurs within a specific context, and strategies that work in one setting may backfire in another.

For this reason, the next section of this book presents case studies of five successful school heads who worked in five very different school contexts. It tries to show how exerting symbolic leadership in a school culture can work in practice.

There is no body of established research or documented case studies written from this perspective. Therefore, most of these case studies are based on accounts written about principals from other perspectives, but ones that offer unintended examples and lessons.

Principals as Culture Builders: Five Case Studies

How do principals go about the task of understanding, shaping and changing the culture of schools? The focus of these five cases, and the descriptions of individual actions which follow, will deal primarily with the roles of school leaders who actively built school cultures, who intentionally shaped the norms, values, beliefs, and assumptions guiding the actions of teachers and others in their schools. Four of these five case studies are part of the literature on schools and one is a yet unpublished study by the authors.

Since the primary foci of these cases were not the general principles outlined earlier, each gives a somewhat incomplete picture of the culture-building process. Nonetheless, together they provide substantial information on how principals go about developing the cultures of their organizations, creating cultures on which to build excellence.

The cases illustrate the complex issues surrounding symbolic leadership. By examining in close detail the work of five administrators, we hope that other principals and headmasters will be able to see the possibilities in their own situation.

But again, our key cautionary note: the first step in working with a culture is to understand it. None of the specific strategies or factors used in the cases is a recipe for others to follow. Specific approaches must be designed and tailored to fit the topology and texture of a particular school.

The five cases represent a wide variety of situations. The settings vary with regard to principal incumbency, school characteristics, student abilities, and organizational history.

The cases describe public and private schools of varying sizes and levels, located in rural, urban, and suburban settings. The schools have students with varying academic achievement levels, from very high to very low. Some principals started afresh, but most revitalized or rebuilt existing cultures.

The approaches of the five principals also differed. Their methods ranged from relatively simple symbolic actions that involved consistent modeling, teaching, and coaching behaviors to the construction of complex ceremonies, rituals, and traditions.

Their approaches arose from different cultural imperatives. Assumptions embedded in the existing cultures they faced differed widely from school to school: some schools were viewed as a sanctuary for children of chaotic homes, while others were viewed primarily as a place for the development of higher academic skills and socialization into adulthood.

In some schools, teachers assumed they were preparing students for the world of work, while in others teachers stressed preparation for college. The professional values of some schools supported the autonomy of teachers, while the values in others subordinated teachers to bureaucratic procedures.

While the approaches of the five principals were very different, the differences reinforce a cardinal rule of symbolic leadership: don't fool with something you don't first understand. Each one of the principals we will describe would be reading the following cases looking for ideas, not searching for recipes.

Their intuitive choices reflected the demands and needs of their own settings. None of the principals focused *only* on building or changing the culture of the school. While building the culture they also worked full time on the tasks at hand: fulfilling the students needs and upgrading their skills; defining the formal structure of roles and relationships often using their authority to confront conflict and to exercise their power by empowering others.

But the real administrative genius revealed in the cases centers around symbolic leadership: the ability to understand and shape the culture, using routine work, dormant values, and critical events to mold a shared direction.

Case Study 1

School: **Cherry Creek High School**
secondary, public, large
80% of students college bound

Community: **Affluent Denver suburb**

Principal: **Hank Cotton**
focused on achievement and attendance

SOURCE: This case study is from Kent Peterson's unpublished field notes.

Hank Cotton: Suburban High School

Every principal faces a unique combination of circumstances and deals with them in his or her own way. The story of Hank Cotton at Cherry Creek High School is rife with conflict, confrontation, and obstacles overcome. It shows that changing a school's culture takes time and persistence.

Though he was hired to make changes in the school, it took a long process of give and take before the vision he evolved was shared throughout the school community.

The School: Cherry Creek High

Cherry Creek High School is a large, public, secondary school located in an affluent Denver suburb. The students come from well-educated and advantaged backgrounds. They are generally high achievers, and over 80 percent go on to college.

Cherry Creek High School has grown along with the rapidly expanding suburb it serves. The population grew quickly from semirural to suburban in the early 1970s. The school building expanded like a New England farmhouse—one structure at a time. The high school now has four separate buildings, loosely connected by enclosed walkways.

Like many high schools in the 1970s, Cherry Creek adopted its superintendent's progressive educational ideas. In the spirit of innovation of the times, the school liberalized its authority structure, relaxed formal expectations, and increased options for students.

Eventually, Cherry Creek became an "open campus" school. Students were permitted to leave the school grounds any time they were not in class. Courses proliferated, and requirements became increasingly flexible. Inclass attendance declined—to below 80 percent during some class periods. Teachers "canceled" classes when they wished. Sanctions for cutting class and school were not regularly enforced.

Over time, the community became increasingly concerned about academic achievement and student drug use. A new superintendent arrived and decided to make

some changes. After a series of five high school principals in 6 years, characterized by the teachers as never "unpacking their bags," Cherry Creek hired an administrator from the East coast—Hank Cotton.

The Principal: Hank Cotton

Hank Cotton had been a traditional principal in a large urban high school. He arrived at Cherry Creek without preconceptions of what specific changes were needed.

It was clear to the superintendent and some parents, however, that the school was far from reaching its potential. They wanted to solve problems they perceived: discipline, absenteeism, drug use by students, and an overstuffed and understructured set of curriculum offerings and graduation requirements. The new superintendent gave Cotton a mandate to make changes and remove some, but not all, of the prior innovations.

While it may have been clear to some that problems existed, it was not clear to others. Some parents, students, and faculty were content with how things were. Cotton faced both opportunities for and obstacles to making fundamental changes in the culture of the school. Overcoming the obstacles meant generating conflict and resistance.

The School and the Principal

Cotton had a mandate from the superintendent and board, as well as the support of some parents, to improve Cherry Creek High School. After "reading" the existing culture and assessing the school's formal structure, he identified several areas he felt needed immediate attention.

Generating and Using Conflict

He decided to begin by focusing on the importance of student responsibility and academic performance. Cotton believed that attendance was a prerequisite to student achievement. He believed that to achieve their potential students ought to attend class, and that something of value went on in every classroom every day.

Consequently, to deal with prevailing absenteeism, he instituted new student attendance policies. The school

maintained its open campus—reiterating the belief that students should learn adult responsibilities through self-regulation. However, when classes met, students and teachers were expected to attend.

Some 235 students were soon suspended because of infractions of the policy. Needless to say, the parents complained, and Cotton was often on the telephone, explaining the new policy to upset parents. The policy, however, was easy to relate to the existing parental values, since students had to be in class to learn. Student absenteeism dropped dramatically after the first semester.

Cotton created other new rules. He instituted a new parking policy to keep students' cars from damaging the school's lawns. As luck would have it, one of the first cars in violation belonged to a board member's son. When asked whether it should be towed, Cotton responded, "Definitely!" The policy was upheld then and thereafter, no matter who the offender.

New policies affecting teachers produced the greatest conflict. The faculty saw themselves as autonomous professionals, who operated independently and were accustomed to only loose supervision by administrators. They elected department chairs and felt allegiance to their particular subject matter. Cotton came in and established a new system of teacher evaluations to give them feedback about their performance in the classroom. The new system was demanding, raised faculty concerns, and pit many of them against Cotton. Some of the best teachers were evaluated first in an effort to ease those concerns.

His first year also triggered one of the first union grievances in the school's history. Cotton, concerned with the proliferation of courses in many departments, made a specific request that the social studies department redesign the curriculum by the middle of April and eliminate many of the 70 minicourse electives. The department filed a grievance stating that it was the prerogative of the faculty, not the principal, to institute curriculum changes. The grievance was finally considered by the board of education. The board supported

the principal's right to ask for revisions in the curriculum.

Cotton also changed the method of selecting the department chairs. He appointed the chairs rather than having them elected by teachers in the department. Faculty resistance was immediate. A petition signed by 89 out of the 160 teachers voiced concerns about the change. At the end of the year, Cotton summarized the faculty sentiment: "If the teachers had been able to vote on whether to retain me that first year, I would have been out."

At times Cotton even alienated himself from district colleagues by taking strong, vocal stands on issues. For example, one year he banned smoking in the school. No one, not students, teachers, or administrators, was allowed to smoke on the premises under threat of suspension or administrative reprimand. Stress increased. No other school in the district took the same stand. During one meeting with the superintendent, Cotton was asked, "Do you have to do (these things) so flamboyantly?" Cotton's response was, "Wait for the results!"

Building Support for New Values

During many of the confrontations Cotton had to press ahead alone. Even when some faculty, parents, or students believed he was right, they often were unwilling to publicly support his decisions or views. Public support developed slowly.

Cotton's support was based mainly in the changes that helped achieve academically, socially or athletically valued ends, primarily those that directly supported teachers and their work. For example, Cotton did away with such teacher "administrivia" as responsibilities for signing out textbooks, hall duty, cafeteria duty, study hall supervision, and writing and checking permission passes. Others took on these responsibilities—despised by the teachers—so that teachers could concentrate on teaching. Cotton hoped to build support while reinforcing the belief that teaching, not managing students' routine behavior, was the most important activity of the school.

Further, the principal publicly recognized and rewarded teachers and administrators who demonstrated

the values of excellence, improvement and collegiality. He commended such effort verbally and gave them administrative support for new ideas. Cotton found resources for the good teachers to attend conferences, purchase materials for special projects, and to work on summer committees that paid a salary. Faculty who remained loyal to the old ways did not receive as many extra resources. As a result, their own ideas and plans often could not be carried out.

Cotton also built support for his vision during his first two years by working directly with other groups in the school.

He met regularly with the Student Senate, the Parent Senate as well as the Faculty Senate. He was willing to meet with any group at any time to discuss the school and its programs. These meetings often included unhappy or worried parents, faculty, and students. The meetings both resolved the conflicts at hand and allowed Cotton to explain his purposes. He used them to communicate the broader purposes and hopes he had for the school. The meetings developed energy, commitment, and consensus that previously had not been tapped in the school.

Support from students increased as the two oldest classes of students graduated and the new students, who had never attended the "old" school, filled the freshman and sophomore ranks. The principal started to work with the leaders of the freshman and sophomore classes. Student government was given new responsibilities in several areas and recognized for its accomplishments. He granted student government more authority and visibility, gave students office space, and established monthly meetings with the principal. This increased student support for Cotton and shaped more positive student attitudes about the school.

Increased Support for the New Values

Cotton kept close contact throughout the change with every major group in the school, meeting, talking, and discussing feelings about the school and presenting any new program or policy that was planned. Over time the intensity of concerns decreased, the number of negative calls, discussions, and letters fell, while the number of

neutral—or positive—interactions and comments increased. Teachers started to ask him to speak to their classes, student government invited him to meet with them over matters of mutual interest, yearbooks were dedicated to him, and parents substantially increased their financial donations to the school. Whereas Cotton's presence at a student activity once engendered mild hostility, eventually his presence at a concert, game, or ceremony was welcomed. Many more qualified teachers came to apply for positions than the school had positions to fill. Cotton saw all of these indicators of changing cultural values tip in his direction.

It took 2 years to solidify teacher support, a process hastened by the transfer of some of the most disgruntled teachers to the new high school that was added to the district. Cotton replaced them with new teachers whose values fit more closely with his own. He selected new teachers for their ability, but also for the compatibility of their basic beliefs regarding student attendance, performance, and the success of the school as a whole. Prevailing norms were impressed upon newcomers during their first years by the principal and key personnel. By the 1970s, the expectations for excellence in teaching were so strong that new teachers (even seasoned professionals) often felt considerable pressure the first year, fearful that they were not "measuring up" to the Cherry Creek standard.

Internalizing New School Priorities

Teachers value student academic performance. Research indicates it is the most important intrinsic reward they seek. Therefore, one of Cotton's activities during his early years at the school was not to impose new values but to reinforce the existing value teachers and the community placed on student achievement. He raised its relative priority compared to the school's prior emphasis upon equality and noncompetitiveness.

By the 1980s attendance at school and in class became one of the highest in the district, even though students were allowed, when they had not scheduled class, to leave school grounds at will. They could go to study hall, study in the halls, or simply hang out across the street. While an administrative apparatus was put in place to "catch" offenders, attendance in class came to

occur largely because it was part of the school's mores, not because of the fear of sanctions.

Setting an Example of Values

The principal helped embed his priorities in the school by practicing what he preached. He modelled his values. While he espoused high standards of performance and professionalism, he also made a point to attend seminars, institutes, and executive development programs to improve his own work. Cotton regularly carried novels or histories around with him, and he quoted from them in his memos. He wrote clearly. He made a point to select other administrators and teachers who were also well read and articulate. He spoke of the value of the world of the intellect and set an example of it.

Using Stories to Build Culture

Cotton reinforced norms of performance and success by recounting stories of the school's achievements. Stories communicate what is important in a simple and direct way. They can help bind faculty to the school by making them feel part of a successful, lively, interesting, and select organization. The history of the school is shared in this oral tradition and expressed by teachers as well as the principal. Cotton was a veritable library of stories of the success of individuals who exemplified the values and traditions of Cherry Creek High School. In talking with outsiders, newcomers, or media people he would start the conversation with a set of stories of successes at the school.

Cotton told a core of a dozen stories. Their basic themes were (1) the importance of innovation; (2) the need for hard, continuous work to achieve success; (3) the ways that quiet students or teachers finally achieve success through continuous struggle; (4) the ways teachers work together to improve classes and enjoy each others' company; (5) the importance of recruiting and selecting only the best teachers available; (6) the importance of varied, quality cocurricular activities to provide choices that meet the needs of students; and (7) the ability of teachers to make a difference in the lives of students. The stories Cotton told covered the range of values, beliefs, and assumptions that expressed the values undergirding the emerging culture.

Ceremonies, Rituals, Traditions, and Symbols

Cotton made extensive use of ceremonies, rituals, traditions, and symbols to reinforce the new priorities. At Cotton's first graduation at Cherry Creek, students threw cans, tossed paper airplanes, and were generally inattentive. Cotton told the seniors the next year that the graduation ceremony was a problem, and that it needed to be revamped. He involved them in reshaping graduation to elevate its importance. Students now wear caps and gowns in a more formal atmosphere. The ceremony became a valued occasion for students and parents.

Cotton gradually increased the number of ceremonies that celebrated academic and cocurricular success. These ceremonies were made more formal, structured, and were carefully orchestrated to denote the importance of the event. While he routinely dressed in a coat and tie, Cotton deliberately changed his "uniform" for these ceremonies. He brought a dark suit to school to change into for honors assemblies or evening award ceremonies.

As the school achieved new successes, Cotton related each to the belief in Cherry Creek's "tradition of excellence." Bumper stickers were printed stating simply "Let the tradition continue . . . " and "The Legend Lives on . . . . " He referred to success as part of a "tradition," stating, "We traditionally send many seniors East" or "Our football team is traditionally one of the best in the State." Speaking of routine behavior as "traditional" signaled to others that these were part of a valued pattern, desirable and even inevitable.

The principal used overt school symbols with commitment and pride. An avid jogger, he would not run without the school's "bruin" on his exercise shoes. He had a set of different lapel pins depicting the logo of the school that regularly adorn his sport coats. In the school, the Cherry Creek bruin is still displayed all around the buildings, on the athletic fields, and in administrative offices. Bumper stickers "advertising" the school or individual activities (the State championship tennis team, for example) are on cars throughout the district.

And, when the district developed a poster "Onward to Excellence," Cotton made a mock poster for the school "Beyond Excellence to Greatness" which was displayed in his office. The prevalence of these symbols, and the pride with which they are worn cement the bonds among school members and communicate school spirit.

Conclusion

Hank Cotton took over a school that had extensive problems but also had customarily valued educational achievement. By reaffirming this old value and steering the school in some new directions, the principal, over time, reshaped the culture. He focused the school on norms of professionalism, performance, improvement, and collegiality.

The school now recognizes and rewards academic excellence and superior performance in such areas as debate, the school newspaper, and the yearbook. Presently, the congruence of school values with community values has been reestablished. The faculty, community, and students share enormous pride in the school and loyalty to its principal.

Case Study 2

School: **Orchard Park Elementary School**
elementary, public

Community: **Urban, San Francisco Bay area**
poor, ethnically mixed,
predominantly minority

Principal: **Frances Hedges**
focused on reading skills
and student self-esteem

SOURCE: This case is based on materials in the following reports:

Dwyer, D. C., Lee, G. V., Barnett, B. G., Filby, N. N., & Rowan, B. (1984, November). *Frances Hedges and Orchard Park Elementary School: Instructional leadership in a stable urban setting*. San Francisco: Instructional Management Program, Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development.

Dwyer, D. C. (1986, Fall). "Frances Hedges: A case study of instructional leadership." *Peabody Journal of Education*, *63*(1), 19–86.

Peterson, K. D. (1986, Fall). "Vision and problem finding in principals' work." *Peabody Journal of Education*, *63*(1), 87–106.

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Frances Hedges: Urban Elementary School

Whereas Hank Cotton built a culture of academic achievement in an affluent suburban secondary school, Frances Hedges did so in a poor inner-city elementary school in the San Francisco Bay area. Orchard Park Elementary School had the sorts of problems, obstacles, and challenges common in many urban settings.

Using her own approach, Frances Hedges encouraged important academic values and success in a school facing difficult social circumstances. Hedges's style was her own and different from that of Hank Cotton, but there were also important similarities in the underlying values and beliefs on which the Orchard Park and Cherry Creek cultures were built.

The School: Orchard Park Elementary

The 500 students at Orchard Park are from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Most are from lower and lower-middle income families. Some 32 percent of the parents receive Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and 58 percent are unskilled workers.

When Frances Hedges arrived, Orchard Park Elementary School faced many difficulties.

- The school district was a large bureaucratized system in which maintainance and budget were chronic problems;
- The principals were restricted by the union contract in selecting and hiring teachers;
- It was difficult to get parents involved in schoolwide activities because so many of them worked or attended school themselves;
- Ten languages were spoken in the community and many students needed additional help in developing basic English proficiency;
- Almost 60 percent of the students were black, 13 percent Hispanic, 16 percent Asian, and 11 percent white; and

- Student performance on reading and math tests was well below national norms.

Dealing with unalterable circumstances while improving student discipline and student performance were central challenges at Orchard Park.

The Principal: Frances Hedges

Frances Hedges was a 60-year-old black woman at the time her school was studied; she had been principal at Orchard Park for 6 and one-half years. She conveyed a sense of elegance through her careful dress and demeanor.

She had wanted to become a child psychologist, though personal economic considerations made that impossible. Instead, Hedges spent 21 years teaching in the classroom in the district where she was now a principal. After earning her master's degree in educational administration, she became a reading resource teacher, then a program coordinator, and later a vice-principal. While it was not her original career goal, she was satisfied with her position as principal.

Her relations with her staff were personable and direct. She was friendly and warm, freely offering compliments for jobs well done and successes achieved. Her nonverbal messages combined a warmth of tone with "touches, hugs, and embraces."

As with many good elementary principals, she spent a substantial part of each day with students, observing them as they passed in the halls and greeting and supervising them when they entered the building and during recess. Though she had a nurturing relationship with students, she did not hesitate to discipline them for infractions of school rules. Known as a strict disciplinarian, she insisted on maintaining order.

The School and the Principal

One of the challenges of an urban school is the enormous number of problems demanding attention. The number and range of social, economic, physical, and psychological problems found in the school make identifying a core focus or central mission problematic; there

are so many needs and so many missions that could be undertaken! To deal with them, a principal must define priorities by looking to the school's core values.

Creating Purpose

Hedges succeeded in building a sense of community, shaping a coordinated improvement effort, and improving order and discipline by focusing on specific values in two key areas: academic achievement and self-esteem. Moreover, she emphasized the positive relationship between the two.

This philosophy helped teachers understand and internalize an overall purpose for the school. They translated that purpose into instructional and disciplinary actions. Thus, Frances Hedges nurtured a set of positive school beliefs that shaped the school's specific culture.

Concentrating on Core Values

Rather than trying to solve all the problems of the school, Hedges focused on two critical values: the critical need for all students to have sound reading skills, and the importance of a warm, nurturing climate in which students could develop a sense of self-esteem. In pursuit of the first value, Hedges helped develop a strong reading and language arts program. To promote the second value she encouraged cooperation, personal responsibility, and feelings of self-worth among students.

She believed that if students could improve their reading, other academic areas would improve as well. She also believed that improved self-esteem would help a student function better academically, and vice versa. Academic improvement and improved self-esteem would reinforce each other to the benefit of each student and the school.

Reading as a central value

Hedges used multiple strategies to reinforce the belief that reading should be central at Orchard Park.

- She recruited and hired a full-time reading specialist and insisted the librarian work with the new specialist;
- She met regularly with faculty members to discuss the direction reading was taking at their grade levels and encouraged staff development

and inservice training in the teaching of reading;

- In faculty meetings she spoke of the importance of using the reading specialist, encouraged the use of reading centers, and suggested reading lab activities;
- She went regularly into classrooms and worked directly with teachers;
- She contributed to most instructional decisions, including textbook selection; and
- She monitored student progress and reviewed all report cards.

Hedges not only offered technical help, she built norms and beliefs about reading. She believed that by changing instruction and curriculum, student performance could improve. She would not accept that poor achievement was the inevitable result of a student's background or lack of parent involvement. This approach shaped teachers' behaviors in the classroom. Attention and time spent in reading instruction increased.

Hedges personally promoted the structure and activities that shaped routines and reinforced underlying beliefs about the value of reading. She gave daily, consistent attention to reading instruction. What she did sent repeated signals to teachers and students about the critical importance of reading skills. The sincerity and consistency of her behavior increased the effect of her actions on the school culture.[37]

Focusing on self-esteem

Hedges and her teachers tried to make the physical and social environment of the school one that students and teachers would be proud of. She helped care for the building, regularly reminded students of expectations for behavior, constantly rewarded students who behaved well, commented on students' behavior when she visited a classroom, and planned events for which students could take or share responsibility.

For example, Hedges met with two boys who had been identified as having low self-esteem. She made them captains of a "chair crew" that would prepare the audito-

rium for assemblies. She called the boys into her office and, with a serious face, explained the job. Jimmy would be responsible for setting up chairs, Lafayette for putting them away. Each would select a small group of other children, a team, to help him. "You'll have these jobs for the whole year," Hedges explained, "so it's up to you to make sure that things are orderly." After she showed them how the chairs were to be set up and stored in the auditorium, Hedges left the boys. They leaped into the air, smiling, and shook each other's hand.

This sort of planned intervention was typical of how Hedges worked with students. She constantly counseled and consoled, corrected them, and set an example herself. She picked up litter at recess. She corrected students' behavior when necessary, praised them as often as possible, and always made sure that the children understood why they were being praised or corrected.

Her approach to curriculum change reflected the view that everyone in the school had to work together. To achieve this, she developed a "circuit group" meeting of teachers to work together on curriculum. She helped define a 3-year plan for improvement. Hedges used these work session activities to reinforce the values of growth, improvement, and problem solving. She ***demonstrated*** the behavior, energy, and attitudes she sought to instill in students and teachers alike.

Finding the Right Staff

While Hedges had relatively little influence over hiring decisions, her years in the district in teaching, technical, and administrative roles helped her attract the faculty she wanted. Teachers who had come to know her asked for transfers to Orchard Park when openings were available.

Eventually, Hedges had a core group of five teachers, all of whom had worked with her before and all of whom shared her educational values. This group served as an important source of support for Hedges' efforts to define and shape the culture at Orchard Park.

Dealing With Conflict

There were formidable obstacles to her attempts to build a sense of community within the school. Hedges faced conflict within the school, but her style of dealing

with it was quite different from that of Hank Cotton. Both within the faculty and the community, she had to fight ingrained beliefs that students from lower income homes could not learn.

Initially, there was little parental support for the school. To overcome this she instituted field trips that included parents, designed special projects for parents, and held regular back-to-school picnics. Eventually, parents, too, became supportive of the school. When the district attempted to transfer Hedges to another school, parents spontaneously rallied to her support and successfully blocked the move.

She worked to convince teachers of the benefit of collegial school improvement. Several teachers resisted the "intrusion" of the reading specialist into their decisions about grouping students for reading. Hedges convened a school retreat to deal with the issue. The retreat itself established a collegial process, resolved the conflict, and improved staff relationships.

Her success was illustrated at the end of the school year when the staff organized a surprise assembly to pay tribute to her. The whole school gathered, and each class made a presentation, reading poems written specifically for her. Afterwards, Hedges was given a red rose by a student from each class.

Setting an Example of Values

Culture building in Orchard Park school depended heavily on the direct, face-to-face work of the principal. Frances Hedges did not choose to "stage" formal events at Orchard Park. Ceremonies (like the surprise assembly) and rituals (such as her routine availability in the corridor to review teachers' samples of outstanding student efforts) emerged naturally.

She had clear beliefs about the relationship between self-esteem and achievement and acted upon them in everything she said and did. The depth of her convictions and the consistency with which she acted upon them had enormous impact upon the school.

Conclusion

Frances Hedges was highly effective at molding a positive culture in a difficult setting. It is hard to reshape the culture of a school with scarce resources, economic hardships, and the limitations of a large bureaucratic district. It took time, attention, clarity, and energy.

But the values defined and reinforced by Hedges were ultimately reflected in the everyday life of the school. We find this illustrated both by the parents' refusal to allow her to be transferred and by the surprise assembly given to honor her.

Teachers appear to have internalized the values and norms that Hedges strove to instill; their actions came to be based on shared values rather than on directives or commands from the principal. Order and discipline in the school improved over Hedges' tenure. Parent involvement and commitment increased. Significant changes in the reading program occurred at Hedges' initiative. There was also some evidence that the level of student achievement began to rise.

In all, she was able to strengthen the sense of mission and community on the part of teachers and members of the school community. She successfully nurtured a rich approach to school improvement in the face of what would have appeared to some as insurmountable odds.

Case Study 3

School: **Kennedy High School**
secondary, public

Community: **Urban New York City**
economic and ethnic mix

Principal: **Bob Mastruzzi**
focused on inclusion, diversity, helping the less fortunate

SOURCE: This case is adapted from *The Good High School*, Sara Lawrence Lightfoot. Copyright © 1983 by Basic Books, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Basic Books, Inc., publishers, New York.

Bob Mastruzzi: Inner City High School

Built in the early 1970s, Kennedy High School in New York City is a successful inner city secondary school with enormous racial, ethnic, and social class diversity. The principal, Bob Mastruzzi, appointed even before the final touches were completed on the building, played a key role in shaping the culture of the school. Mirroring the diverse curriculum of his school, Mastruzzi used a diverse repertoire of methods to shape and reinforce core values, building a unique culture at Kennedy.

The School: Kennedy High

Operating in New York City, the Nation's largest urban school district, Kennedy High School faced built-in obstacles to success. First, there were the bureaucratic obstacles, including contracts and administrative policies that severely constrained hiring, firing, budgetary, and resource management practices.

Second, the size of the school—along with the wide diversity among students in their backgrounds and abilities—created obstacles to the development of a shared sense of mission. By the 1980s, Kennedy High School housed over 5,000 students varying from upper-class to poverty-level, speaking several languages, and with family and racial backgrounds originating on five continents.

There was also a great diversity of norms and values among faculty and the community, and this increased the difficulty of developing and articulating a common vision. At the same time, the school's lack of cultural history created opportunities for a leader who could take the sort of actions needed to build a culture of excellence.

The Principal: Bob Mastruzzi

Bob Mastruzzi, a product of the New York City schools, moved up the career ladder from teacher to principal. Not a very tall man, an impeccable dresser, Mastruzzi was in his fifties when he became principal. His forcefulness, confidence, and energy communicated strength and direction.

Faculty members characterized him as "dynamic," "charismatic," and "charming." His vitality and physical presence reflected the focus and concerns of the school and its clientele. Most of the faculty appreciated his energy and his warmth in interpersonal relationships.

The School and the Principal

Like Hank Cotton and Frances Hedges, one of Bob Mastruzzi's first tasks was to identify and articulate an educational philosophy or "vision" for the school. As the first principal of a brand new school, he had the luxury of beginning with a *tabula rasa*, without a pre-existing structure or established faculty ways.

Creating Core Values

Mastruzzi's challenge was developing a viable set of values and beliefs among members of a faculty who had not even been selected. The lack of history created many opportunities, but it also accentuated the need to develop shared meaning among a group of virtual strangers, all from other schools.

This situation heightened the need for Mastruzzi to read carefully the differences among the groups. It also made it difficult to identify particular areas of shared purpose and interest.

He adroitly identified diversity, inclusion, and helping the less fortunate as values for the school, themes that crossed subcultural boundaries. While Kennedy High School will always face the problem of finding shared meaning among its diverse populations, these three core values provide continuing focal points.

Using Conflict To Build the Mission

In large city school systems with limited material, social, and symbolic resources, attempts to build an effective school are confronted by negativism. Early on, Mastruzzi faced negative beliefs about schools in the city and the bureaucratic limitations on hiring and firing. Mastruzzi talked with many teachers who did not believe that the new high school could succeed. (This was, as we will soon see, one way to help pick the right faculty.)

Once school began he took strong steps to shape the curricula, an approach not typically appreciated by high school teachers. He met resistance by the faculty at Ken-

nedy; even now some faculty resist giving administrators their lesson plans.

To use the energy positively that might be wasted on conflict, Mastruzzi worked to instill teachers with a commitment to and belief in the school, rather than loyalty to a discipline or department. He spent considerable time visiting classes, talking with teachers, and shaping a shared set of beliefs and values.

Conflict arose between the school and the community when local adults complained of student disruptions. Mastruzzi demonstrated his understanding of diverse cultures and his political acumen through his measured response to fierce community objections (with racial overtones) about the "hordes" of students marching through the neighborhood from the subway station to school each morning. Through negotiation and persuasion he secured commitment from the city to widen the sidewalks.

Mastruzzi framed conflicts between the faculty and administration and between the community and the school in terms of an underlying shared sense of mission and accomplishment. At the least, Mastruzzi made sure that faculty and community members understood the values of the school and what it was trying to achieve. This reduced the negative impact of conflict on daily activities. However, it must be noted that the peaceful equilibrium was at times fragile.

Selecting the Right Faculty

Mastruzzi used the selection process as a ritual of revitalization and value transmission, not just as a means to "staff up" the school. He searched for people with particular values and abilities instead of passively accepting applicants sent by the central administration. He actively sought teachers and department chairs with energy, ability, and an interest in building an effective, highly diverse urban high school. He drew heavily on his personal knowledge of effective department chairpersons, personally interviewed key candidates, and used his highly refined skills of persuasion to recruit those he considered the best.

Staff members he selected in the early days mentioned that he used his own enthusiasm, optimism, and

energy to filter out less committed teachers and to engender enthusiasm and hope in those who decided to transfer. Teacher candidates who wish to be left alone are not likely to seek work in a school run by an energetic, educationally focused principal who communicates high, visionary expectations. Mastruzzi reinforced those expectations by repeated assertions that Kennedy would be "a new slate," a school where teachers from frustrating, debilitating situations could be revitalized and rechallenged. Many teachers arrived at school already embracing hopes and beliefs for change and improvement.

Setting an Example of Values

Leaders model the values and actions they want for their organizations. Mastruzzi is a notable example. He was obviously excited by the diversity of the student body, encouraging special "ethnic clubs" and events. In his exchanges with teachers and students he modeled the humane, civil behavior that he expected of others.

Mastruzzi took an active educational role early in the history of Kennedy High School by participating in planning and shaping the curriculum. While he granted considerable discretion to department chairs, he helped shape the overall curriculum design. When some of the original ideas proved too chaotic, he intervened to redesign the school's instructional core, even though many of these original ideas were his own.

The principal was a constant presence in the school, visiting classes, touring the multiple levels of the building, and visiting with students who passed through the halls between classes. In this way Mastruzzi was able to gauge what was going on. A careful listener and observer, he gathered data on the impact of his work—and the work of others. It was through these daily tours, for example, that he was able to pinpoint and correct certain curriculum problems.

Mastruzzi also spent time with community groups and central administrators "marketing" the school, telling stories, seeking resources and support, and shaping positive relationships with influential stakeholders. Participation of teachers in making decisions was central to his leadership style. He encouraged commitment by

fostering participation in decisions that would shape the mission and culture of the school.

Mastruzzi spent considerable time promoting student attendance and communicated to teachers regularly about the importance of having students in classes. Attendance rates in the school were measured and reported to teachers daily so that each knew the percentage of students attending a particular class. The principal constantly observed that students cannot learn if they are not in school. He announced his "fetish" for attendance and gave awards to those who attended class regularly. These actions reinforced the belief that attendance was key.

Using Stories To Build Culture

Mastruzzi reinforced norms and values of the staff he selected and shaped the norms and behaviors of those new to the school by paying consistent attention to and appreciating success in valued activities. Constantly seeking stories of success, he demonstrated the importance of looking at the positive accomplishments of the school first. Moreover, he told these stories as a way of broadcasting the school's virtues.

Several types of stories were used by Mastruzzi to communicate values.

- He told Horatio Alger stories of students who overcame language or other barriers to achieve top ranks among peers;
- He shared stories of the city athletic championships won by the school, reinforcing the value of success;
- He was quick to mention special academic programs and the faculty who developed them, communicating the centrality of curriculum and instruction as well as reinforcing the important contributions of individual faculty members; and
- He often retold the stories of out-of-district students who falsified their addresses in order to matriculate at Kennedy.

These stories reinforced the belief in the quality, perseverance, and accomplishments of staff and students.

Encouraging Ceremonies, Rituals, Traditions, and Symbols

Like Hedges of Orchard Park, Mastruzzi, as poet and symbol, used his deeds and words to reinforce the values of the school. But he also relied on other symbols and ceremonies. One year, for example, the school hosted the Special Olympics, the competitive games for handicapped athletes. Over 18 months, members of the school staff planned and directed activities—including some extraordinary events.

In addition to the regular games, they organized ". . . a big parade, an evening of disco dancing, a fireworks display over the river, and games for participants who were not competing."[38] The street leading to the school was renamed "Special Olympics;" politicians and celebrities were invited to the events; and, the whole extravaganza was filmed by students as a documentary. But the success of the event, with the focus on drama and performance, depended on "hard, grueling, rough-edged practice that goes on all the time—before, during, and after the staged events."[39] The event drew the school together; nearly everyone appreciated the accomplishment which symbolized the importance of hard work.

Another tradition was at Christmastime when students distributed presents to needy children in the city. During the holiday season students gathered hundreds of gifts, then wrapped and presented them to needy children. One year gifts were given to children in a home for the mentally retarded, and another year to children in an institution for the severely handicapped.[40] This tradition, like the Special Olympics, communicates, in Mastruzzi's words: "The unbelievable emphasis on doing something for someone else."

Conclusion

The students, teachers, and administrators in this urban secondary school shared a strong set of values that support productivity and commitment. Teachers viewed students as basically "good" but also provided adult support and direction. The teachers themselves

were seen as professionals; they were included in schoolwide decisions and planning.

The culture of Kennedy High School reinforced a belief in the value of diversity. The multiplicity of backgrounds, abilities, and interests among its teachers and students were seen as a positive asset of the school, rather than a problem. Diversity was accepted and used as a source of productive energy, rather than dismissed and hidden.

The culture was galvanized around a basically optimistic outlook on the school and urban education. There appeared to be a high sense of efficacy among nearly everyone in the school, a "can-do" spirit as well as a sense of hope. Absenteeism was among the lowest in the city, and student discipline was within acceptable standards. Student performance was perceived as adequate, and a number of middle-class students chose to attend Kennedy in preference to other schools. Overall, those in the school and the district reported Kennedy as being one of the better high schools in the system.

Bob Mastruzzi helped to shape a school culture that valued student academic accomplishments, humane and civil relations between diverse groups, participation of teachers in school decisionmaking and activities, and academic improvement for all students. Through careful staff recruitment and selection, modeling, and the consistent communication and reinforcement of values, Mastruzzi, along with teachers, students, and other administrators, shaped an urban secondary school into a place with concern for students and a search for success.

Case Study 4

School: **Jefferson Elementary School**
elementary, public

Community: **Rural Nevada**
poor, white, partially transient

Principal: **Ray Murdock**
focused on student achievement, student self-esteem, and community involvement

SOURCE: This case is based on materials contained in the following reports:

Dwyer, D. C., Lee, G. V., Barnett, B. G., Filby, N. N., & Rowan, B. (1984, November). *Ray Murdock and Jefferson Elementary School: Instructional leadership in a rural setting*. San Francisco: Instructional Management Program, Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development.

Peterson, K. D. (1986, Fall). "Vision and problem finding in principals' work". *Peabody Journal of Education*, *63*(1), 87–106.

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Ray Murdock: Rural Elementary School

Since school contexts vary enormously, principals select a variety of ways to build shared meaning. In the case of Jefferson Elementary School, we see the principal, Ray Murdock, cajole a demoralized school with entertaining ceremonies that united the community and reinforced their belief in students' accomplishments. His approach was different from those of Cotton, Hedges, or Mastruzzi, even though the underlying principles are similar.

The School: Jefferson Elementary

Jefferson Elementary School is a rural elementary school located in an underpopulated and economically depressed section of Nevada. The school houses kindergarten through fifth grades in 18 classrooms. Some 410 students attended the school at the time this case was first prepared. Jefferson was a predominately white school (96 percent) of low-income families, many of whom were transient workers. While the outside conditions were rather bleak, Murdock ultimately made the internal environment attractive and warm with substantial instructional materials for teachers.

Neither the internal circumstances nor the forces at work in the external environment were conducive to developing a strong school ethos.

Some situational factors, however, supported cultural change:

- The school was not perceived as successful and, therefore, there was some agreement that it needed to be improved;
- Existing resources were so minimal that any additional resources would have a significant impact and could be used to shape new directions; and
- Lack of a powerful community meant that developing a new sense of unity and purpose inside the school would not have to overcome outside resistance.

But other less benign forces were also at work in the school:

- The high proportion of transient parents made it difficult to secure parental support;
- There was considerable diversity in values among the parents;
- The lack of material, social, and symbolic resources decreased the rewards available to reinforce values that the principal might try to instill in faculty and students; and
- The physical condition of the building suggested both a material and spiritual disrepair, a lack of district interest in the school.

Providing the basic necessities meant paying attention to finding minimal resources—even basic instructional materials were in short supply. The school also had to overcome the lack of hope and spirit symbolized by the lack of available resources.

In other words, despite certain factors that could be turned into advantages, Jefferson Elementary could best be characterized as a school with high diversity in community values, transiency among parents, scarce resources, and a dilapidated, unappealing building. The school was, overall, an unpleasant place to be.

The Principal: Ray Murdock

Ray Murdock, at the time of this study, was just under 50 years old and had been Jefferson's principal for 16 years. Following service in the Marines he taught industrial arts, became vice-principal of Jefferson and then was promoted to principal. Murdock was a distinguished looking man who jogged regularly. His day looked much like the days of most principals—filled with many varied tasks, problems, and, of course, interruptions.

The School and the Principal: Articulating a Vision

From somewhere within himself, Ray Murdock developed a clear vision for Jefferson. He articulated the mis-

sion of the school as serving the special needs of students in the Jefferson community and "to be a showcase in this county and in the State . . . ."[41] He believed the school should and could provide a haven and sanctuary for students, one which would be stable and supportive both of academic growth and of student self-esteem. He wanted Jefferson to be a warm, secure, and interesting place for youngsters.

Murdock believed in helping every child reach his or her potential. He believed further, that this is most likely in a school where adults are positive and open with students and where teachers are cooperative and trusting in their relationships with each other. It was his view that teachers should be granted the autonomy to select instructional strategies and materials and also be held accountable for results.

Over many years, Murdock used a variety of strategies to build a culture that supported these values and beliefs. He recruited and selected people who shared his vision. He modeled his beliefs, demonstrating desired values through his own words and deeds. And, he planned and implemented numerous ceremonies and traditions that supported and reinforced the emerging cultural patterns.

Securing Compatible Staff

Murdock was able to hire almost all of the teachers who came to the school. Through careful interviewing and direct observation of their classroom teaching, Murdock was able to select teachers with educational values similar to his own and with the ability to apply sound instructional techniques. During the hiring interviews, he specifically sought teachers who shared his educational philosophy and his interest in helping students reach their academic potential and developing their self-confidence.

His efforts increased the congruence of teaching styles, decreased conflict among teachers, and fostered greater cohesiveness and cooperation within the school. His inability to remove one teacher whose classroom performance was poor weakened his efforts somewhat, yet did not change the total effect.

Strong cultural norms coupled with careful recruitment of faculty meant that Murdock needed only to encourage and nurture staff's beliefs and values rather than alter them. Cohesion and social support for the principal's view of what Jefferson Elementary School could be created a shared vision for the school.

Setting an Example of Values

One of the most important ways Murdock shaped the culture of Jefferson was by communicating his vision through his behavior. In many of his actions, the principal communicated the importance of everyone "working to help students learn and grow." Murdock regularly served food in the cafeteria line, thus providing time for him to talk with students and demonstrating his view that everyone has to help out in whatever way possible, regardless of status or position. He often helped individual students with classwork—aiding the child, but also signaling the value of *everyone* helping children to learn. When equipment was broken, he often repaired it himself. During summers, he painted rooms and built storage units for the school, saving money to purchase instructional materials.

Murdock also demonstrated the importance of professional growth and improvement. He regularly attended conferences and brought back instructional ideas or materials for the school. He often discussed general school plans and specific features of the reading program with teachers, demonstrating professional development through collegiality and cooperation within the school. He constantly promoted faculty ideas throughout the building.

In many other ways Murdock acted out his beliefs about schools. He was first to purchase a child's drawing at the school Art Auction. At local PTA meetings and with State legislators, he constantly pressed for greater funding of schools, especially for financially strapped rural schools. These actions strongly emphasized to students, teachers, and parents that his stated beliefs about schools and schooling were more than empty rhetoric.

What Murdock did—serving lunches, helping individual students, promoting faculty ideas, and seeking more resources—communicated to teachers and parents what

he thought was important. Time spent keeping the school attractive, equipment running, and students behaving properly reinforced existing values. In addition, Murdock spent considerable time and effort with the reading program. His unbridled support and infectious enthusiasm for the reading program focused everyone's attention on it.[42]

Establishing Ceremonies and Traditions

Murdock established ceremonies, rituals, and school traditions that reinforced underlying values and rewarded members in the Jefferson school community. The cultural activities at Jefferson were meaningful to veterans and newcomers; they communicated a shared purpose.

Many of the ceremonies and traditions centered around two of the core beliefs of the principal: (1) school should be fun and interesting and (2) school should be like a "family," a community of caring adults and children working cooperatively.

To make school attendance fun, Murdock annually held Ping Pong and tetherball tournaments to help increase pupils' interest. Monday was Chewing Gum Day; T-shirts were sold that said "Super Kid"; once a year there was "Kid Day"; and each child on his or her birthday met the principal in his office for special recognition. These traditions made Jefferson a place children could love, a comfortable place to be.

Murdock used more dramatic ceremonies to build morale within the community by highlighting students' achievement. The annual Art Auction is an example. While ostensibly used to raise money for playground equipment and instructional materials, it served other purposes as well.

The Art Auction took place in the evening. The school cafeteria, normally rather plain and drab, was transformed into an art gallery. Colorful, lively children's creative efforts in crayon, oil, watercolor, and pencil adorned the walls. Each artist's effort was matted, and many were framed. They were placed in sections by the student's last name.

The maintenance man served as auctioneer, standing behind microphone and podium to take bids. No bid could be over $10 or under $1, maintaining a price range that local families could afford. The auctioneer held each work aloft, and read the artist's name and grade. Then the bidding commenced with the artwork going to the highest bidder. The principal often bought the first "masterpiece."

This ceremony brought the community—teachers, parents, students, and administrators—together around the common goal of helping the school raise funds. But, there were deeper benefits. The Art Auction celebrated the successes of the art program, demonstrating and inspiring community support for the school. The participants, engaging in a regular communal tradition, bonded together around the promise of students—the most valuable resource of the school. In many ways, the Art Auction was an expression of hope and pride in Jefferson.

Another key ceremony of Jefferson was the yearly Carnival. An elaborately staged social event, the Carnival, like the Art Auction, served several purposes and expressed a number of important things about the school. Held on the school playing field, the Carnival featured booths, games, and food. Community members, faculty, and students had ample opportunity to mill around and talk to one another. From Murdock's dramatic announcement "The Carnival will now begin!" to the final event of the day—an aerial egg drop—the activities were structured to make the day an enjoyable family and school event. It celebrated the value of the school and the community.

The aerial egg drop featured Murdock flying over the school, dropping raw eggs from a plane. Most of the eggs did not break on landing, however, as they were encased in a variety of protective packaging ingeniously designed by students. The egg drop was a dramatic and interest-heightening carnival act. It pulled the community together at the end of the day, around the work and creativity of students. Like the art auction, the egg drop dramatized the values of Jefferson. Overall, the daylong tradition reinforced bonds between school and commun-

ity, raised funds for support of instruction, and provided an enjoyable opportunity for a strained local community to come together in a positive way. It served technical and monetary needs of the school while it simultaneously reinforced cultural norms and values.

Conclusion

The clear purposes Murdock held for Jefferson shaped his daily activities and yearly programs. He created a warm, cohesive climate for the school. He sought simultaneously to build a school where students could also reach their academic potential. He shaped both an administrative structure and a social climate to do this. He consistently paid attention and modeled his central beliefs, and he developed ceremonies and traditions that reinforced them. By selecting teachers whose values and beliefs about teaching were congruent with his own and nurturing them in the school as a whole, Murdock fostered a consistent and coherent culture.

Case Study 5

School: **Deerfield Academy**
secondary, private, all male, residential

Community: **Rural Massachusetts**
socially privileged families,
predominantly from New England

Headmaster: **Frank Boyden**
focused on "the boys," their character,
and academic preparation for college

SOURCE: This case is based on materials contained in *The Headmaster*, John McPhee, Copyright © 1966 by Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Inc., publishers, New York.

Frank Boyden: Rural Boarding School

Frank Boyden built Deerfield Academy into one of the nation's top private boarding schools, catering to socially advantaged, collegebound students. Over a period of 60 years, Boyden shaped an enormously effective school, noted for the cohesion and potency of its culture.

Free of the normal constraints of a public bureaucracy, Boyden devoted his career to building one school culture. He nurtured the values, traditions, and institutional expressions of his vision for the school and "the boys." Though his constituency, resources, and powers were quite different from those facing most principals, the processes he used to succeed seem remarkably similar.

Private School Advantages

Founders of private schools have a special opportunity to create a distinctive cohesive school culture. They begin from scratch. Founders are almost assured a special place in the minds of organizational members. Charisma, foresight, and vision are attributed by virtue of their initiation of the enterprise. (In business, one thinks of Watson at IBM, Land of Polaroid, and Jobs at Apple Computer.)

Furthermore, in private schools

- The mission, goals, and admission of clients can be defined, specified, and shaped by the leaders rather than by public policy or law;
- Leaders are allowed discretion to align purpose, clients, and intermediate goals. Such discretion is not granted public school leaders; and
- Administrators are less constrained than public school leaders by personnel policies. They have more control over the recruitment, selection, and firing of staff, which helps increase the congruence of teachers' and leaders' values and beliefs.

These differences decrease the obstacles to building a cohesive culture in private schools, but do not eliminate

the challenge. It still requires adherence to the same general principles and strategies we have observed in the public school cases.

Frank Boyden and Deerfield Academy: Creating Tradition

In the early 1900s Frank Boyden accepted the job as Headmaster of the local academy in Deerfield, Massachusetts. At the time, Deerfield was a tiny, floundering local school. By the 1950s the academy was a nationally recognized college preparatory school, drawing students from well-educated and privileged families. It is known for preparing students extremely well academically and socially and then seeing they are placed in the Nation's best elite colleges. The school has one of the most attractive campuses and largest endowments of any similar private school. The faculty has a reputation for excellence in teaching, and the institution has a reputation for nurturing the moral and social development of students.

The story of the growth of the Deerfield Academy culture is largely the story of how Frank Boyden shaped the values, beliefs, norms, and basic assumptions of teachers, students, parents, and others connected with the school. In building Deerfield, the headmaster used a wide variety of methods to instill and reinforce in others his basic vision for the school. He employed both simple and complex processes, including such approaches as modeling, creating heroes, ceremonial occasions, and encouraging symbolic activities of various sorts.

Boyden wanted a school that valued the needs and potential of each student and fostered close relationships among members of the "community." He valued performance and success in academics, athletics, and social events, placing special emphasis on ethical, sportsmanlike behavior. In a 1906 manuscript, he wrote "The object of the school should be the development of character, to help each pupil to do that for which he is best suited. This can be done in the country, because the comparatively small numbers make it possible to do much personal work, and the relationship between pupil and teacher becomes more intimate."[43] His vision went be-

yond the printed word. His behavior and decisions as poet and potter communicated and reinforced those values.

Setting an Example of Values

The headmaster of Deerfield Academy, from the beginning, spent long hours on the school grounds, talking with faculty and students. Away from the school he gave the same kind of attention to students who had gone on to college and to older alumni, modeling commitment to hard work and loyalty to the school. Boyden worked from early in the morning until late at night—even into his eighties.

He was an exemplary teacher of values and a supreme motivator of students. During the year, he traveled with athletic teams coaching students on how to "lose with character," while simultaneously motivating students to do their best to win.

His involvement in the selection of students communicated the importance of the students themselves to the success of the school. He personally interviewed students and parents who were interested in the school, screening applicants while communicating to them the importance he placed on the school's success.

Boyden's commitment to the image of the school was illustrated in his interest in the "look" of the place. Plans for new buildings were closely scrutinized for form and function, seeking a fit with the Deerfield "image." In addition, Boyden occasionally orchestrated the school's image by having certain "archetypal" students appear prominently in photographs of the school or come off a team bus first at an opposing team's athletic turf.

He modeled the belief that all are responsible for watching over the welfare of the students and maintaining the cleanliness and appearance of the school. Boyden was often seen stooping down to pick up a piece of litter or to pull a weed.

During regular tours, he talked with students, singling out for special attention those who seemed preoccupied or concerned. He modeled the value of taking every opportunity—whether in classroom, on the playing field, or on the sidewalk—to shape character, teach, and moti-

vate students. When students were about to board buses or vans for a weekend home, the headmaster often had a word of advice or a thought to take along with them. And, unlike most principals or headmasters, he placed his desk at the busiest spot in a *corridor* so that he would have more contact with students.

Boyden's "attention for details" in every aspect of the school's social, architectural, psychological, and instructional life was part of his regular regimen. These activities were important components of the academic and social education of Deerfield students, but they also communicated the school's values to faculty, staff, students and parents.

As symbol and poet, Boyden enacted these values in his behavior and reflected them in the intensity with which he went about his work. The consistency and regularity of his behavior were especially potent at communicating a clear set of expectations to students and faculty, and encouraging a deep commitment to the institution.

Selecting Compatible Staff

Personnel who share an organization's values and beliefs do not have to be as closely monitored, directed, or motivated.[44] This was particularly important at Deerfield where professional norms supported teacher autonomy and self direction. Faculty were needed who would be willing to participate in all aspects of the students' lives—during class, meals, study halls, and after hours.[45]

During the early years of the school the headmaster had few financial rewards to offer, but he instilled in teachers the beliefs that "they could all build something together."[46] Teachers were recruited who valued the intrinsic rewards of helping students develop and who wanted the chance to be part of a larger (and more visionary) enterprise. Prospective teachers were told that Boyden and the faculty are "there for the boys" and not for themselves. This discouraged those who had different views of the teaching role. The strong loyalty to Deerfield maintained the faculty's commitment, even at times when the school's financial condition precluded salary increases.

Teachers knew that they were expected to have a deep commitment to the school and its students. Teachers were "excommunicated" if they did not demonstrate the level expected. As one veteran teacher notes, "He [Boyden] exacts a fantastic commitment. If you give it, he expects more. If you don't give it, he carries you, but you don't exist."[47]

Boyden's belief in loyalty and commitment rather than money or status as the only motivator for his faculty was emphasized by his reaction to the potential crisis of losing a key faculty member to another school. One way founders shape cultures is through their reactions to such key incidents and crises. In this case, the headmaster decided *not* to counter a very attractive offer that had been made to one of his senior teachers. The offer amounted to a department chairmanship and twice the teacher's current salary. Boyden's response was, "He's [the teacher] not interested in money."[48] In fact, the man stayed, thus reinforcing the significance of loyalty as a basic value. Being part of Deerfield was *demonstrated* to be more important than status or money.

Conflict and Culture

The culture of Deerfield did not develop without conflict and disagreement. Initially, Boyden was unwilling to build a boarding school and depended only on local students for enrollments. (His mind was changed by the views and actions of a faculty member, Tom Ashley.) Faculty did not always stay after being offered higher salaries elsewhere. And, there were parents and students who did not see the need for "universal participation" in athletics, some viewing it as an archaic belief in physical sport.

Most often, as in other private schools, disagreement ended with excommunication or the choice not to send one's child to the school—thus muting conflict and increasing cultural consensus. In short, conflict occurred; Boyden effectively countered much of it, most often by identifying the special mission, focus, and approach of the school, and by employing countermeasures not often available to the public school leader.

Using Rituals

In addition to the more direct tactics of infusing values described above, Boyden used ceremonies, rituals, and traditions to communicate values, to strengthen the school's culture, and to socialize students and faculty to behave in accord with his values and thus further support the culture.

The lives of students were highly ritualized. Like a family, they ate together, worshipped together, and had a specified time to go to bed. All students, no matter how physically inept, were expected to participate on some athletic team and practice regularly. These experiences and structured activities gave students—and faculty—a strong sense of structure and belonging without extensive rules and regulations.

School order and regulation came through informally shared expectations and communications of what a "Deerfield student" was supposed to do. Thus, part of the development of culture was the belief that one ought to be self-regulated. The importance of written, formalized rules was minimized. In the culture of Deerfield, expectations and standards of behavior were communicated individually and personally, seldom to a group or through an impersonal note or memo. For example, for many years the headmaster ritually distributed grades (and a comment on them) directly and personally to each student. This tradition communicated the values of personal contact and a concern for academic success.

The rituals of school life shaped the work of students. Rituals communicated and reinforced the importance of the individual and the centrality of internal self-regulation. Loyalty and commitment to those values were supported through consistent communication of their purpose.

Using Stories To Build Culture

Swapping stories of special accomplishments, events, or challenges and retelling stories about special heroes are important activities at Deerfield. Stories communicate to newcomers the level of effort and commitment considered exemplary. Stories communicate to seasoned veterans some of the special aspects of the institution they serve.

Early in the life of Deerfield Academy, a special individual exemplified himself in the academy and later in college and the military. The story of this individual, Tom Ashley, was told over and over at the school. Ashley became a school hero. Telling his story personified the values of Deerfield.

> **Tom Ashley, coaxed into becoming a student at Deerfield, graduated in 1911. Ashley became the epitome of the Deerfield graduate. He played on the football and baseball teams. While he was generally quiet, he was nonetheless able to give a moving graduation speech to his classmates before going on to college at Amherst. Following college, where he was a star athlete and history major, Ashley returned to Deerfield in 1916 to become a faculty member. The headmaster's closest friend, Ashley was able to articulate a vision for the school as a prestigious, nationally recognized institution with halls, dormitories, and a library that would support a major academy—a school that would draw boarding students from across the country.**
>
> **Tom Ashley died in France at Chateau-Thierry during the First World War in a heroic attempt to direct a German machine gun back at a second German emplacement. Following Ashley's death, Boyden used a small donation from the U.S. Marine Corps Commandant to help build the dormitory Ashley had envisioned. Ashley, henceforth, became a hero in the Deerfield culture. He not only had envisioned but also in many ways represented the potential of the school. He had been an excellent athlete as well as a scholar. His life-long actions demonstrated his dedication to the betterment of himself and to the cause of mankind; his death showed him to be a man of courage; reserved and yet a leader.**

Boyden used the story of Tom Ashley to communicate core values of the institution, to demonstrate the ways the school had shaped others, and to motivate slackers to greater effort. The heroic qualities of Ashley and the elements of his life story became a medium through which to communicate the importance of Deerfield's values. The headmaster used the story for decades to shape and reinforce the school's culture.

Conclusion

Through its culture and climate, Deerfield Academy was able to achieve many valued outcomes. It gained a national reputation as a college preparatory school, sent many of its graduates to prestigious universities, and prepared the majority of its graduates for social success. These outcomes were not all the result of the school's special culture, but the culture reinforced many of the instructional and social rituals that fostered achievement and social development.

This case illustrates how the headmaster intentionally and effectively embedded and reinforced a strong and productive school culture. While Boyden was not the founder of Deerfield, the school that he constructed—physically and culturally—bore little resemblance to the faltering local academy that he took over. In the most important sense, the cultural sense, Boyden was very much the founder of Deerfield Academy, and this fact was significant. Partly because of his founding role, and partly because of the private nature of the school, Boyden exercised great power and influence over the recruitment, selection, and socialization of faculty, the design of organizational systems and rituals, and the development of values, beliefs, and basic assumptions.

Early in the life of the school a hero emerged who not only provided the vision for the expanded mission of the school, but exemplified many of the values of the headmaster. Boyden effectively used the story of his hero to shape the culture. He developed rituals and traditions which encouraged the socialization of students and faculty to the values and beliefs Boyden supported, as well as encouraging social and academic development.

Perhaps most effectively, Boyden modeled the values he believed in. He demonstrated, through the time and energy he expended, the importance of attention to individuals, the motivation of individual potential, the responsibility of all to the success of the school, and the centrality of character development. Boyden provides an example of how a school administrator can, over time, build a strong organizational culture around core values.

Common Tactics Across Diverse Situations

Each of the five cases is unique. Each of the five school leaders dealt with the situation in ways suited to his or her personality and the context of the school. They also used similar tactics. Among these tactics were the following:

- Developing a sense—rooted in history, values, and beliefs—of what the school should be;
- Selecting staff whose values fit well with their own;
- Facing conflict rather than avoiding it and, through conflict, resolving disputes and building unity;
- Using one's own behavior to exemplify core values and beliefs, and reinforcing those values consistently in daily routines;
- Telling stories that illustrate shared values; and
- Nurturing the traditions, ceremonies, rituals, and symbols that express and reinforce the school culture.

A Sense of What's Important

Each of the five principals had a sense of what the school should stand for.

For **Hank Cotton**, it boiled down to academic performance and attendance. He felt deeply that attendance was a prerequisite for performance.

Frances Hedges likewise valued academic performance, highlighting its foundation in reading skills and linking it to her students' self-esteem.

Bob Mastruzzi emphasized diversity, attendance, and helping the less fortunate as parts of a school culture of inclusion.

Ray Murdock, like Frances Hedges, concentrated on the importance of students' academic growth

and self-esteem. He sought to make his school a model of rural education by providing a caring school climate, within which each child achieved and felt secure and valued.

Frank Boyden emphasized that he, the faculty, and the school were only there "for the boys." He valued loyalty to the school and all it stood for.

Despite the many similarities and overlap of these principals' goals, each had his or her own, unique value-based vision for the school.

The important factor is not so much the specific content of the vision, but its existence. The similarity and differences among the schools' core values, while interesting, is not important. *The critical commonality among our successful principals and headmaster was a clear and focused sense of mission or values.*

Selecting Compatible Faculty

A second tactical element common to the five successful principals centered on getting the right staff. All five leaders were concerned with the effective performance of teachers, but their concern went deeper than just getting good teachers.

Hank Cotton worked to find faculty who reinforced the values he was trying to inculcate in the culture at Cherry Creek. Those who were loyal to the old priorities and could not accept the changes Cotton was making were encouraged to accept positions elsewhere.

Frances Hedges was severely constrained in her ability to hire and fire Orchard Park teachers, but she drew on her years of work in the district to attract teachers who shared her values. Whenever a position became available at Orchard Park, one or more of her former colleagues would be sure to request a transfer. In just 3 years she had built a substantial core group of like-minded faculty.

Bob Mastruzzi personally screened and hired faculty for the newly established Kennedy High School. He looked for teachers who not only could

perform well but who shared the values that he saw as central to the vision and school culture he was trying to establish.

Ray Murdock, over a period of 16 years, hired almost every teacher at Jefferson Elementary School. He interviewed prospective staff members carefully to ensure their values were consistent with those he wanted for the school.

Frank Boyden selected faculty likely to be loyal to Deerfield and its students, and then held them up as models. He was delighted when a teacher turned down a more highly paid job, which provided him with a new example and story about someone for whom "the boys" were more important than status or money. Those who expressed the wrong values were made to feel they did not belong at Deerfield.

All five school leaders worked hard to get faculty who could share, express, and reinforce the leaders' values and help build the desired school culture.

Dealing With Conflict

All of these successful principals were clear in their own minds about what was important. They were willing to stand up for their values and the school, facing rather than avoiding sources of conflict.

Hank Cotton was direct, even confrontational, in dealing with the teachers and students whose practices conflicted with his sense of what the school was about. The improperly parked car of a school board member's child was summarily towed off school grounds.

Frances Hedges, in contrast, worked to build collaboration with and among her faculty. When faced with conflict over the role of the reading specialist she had hired, she convened a faculty retreat to resolve the problem collectively.

Bob Mastruzzi's style was also conciliatory with both his faculty and community members, but he did not shy away from conflict.

Ray Murdock seems to have had little direct conflict to deal with. The passive resistance he faced—from parents too tired to come to school and from teachers frustrated by inadequate resources—was overcome (as by Hedges) through the principal's energy and persistence. Over the years, he simply "outlasted" any opposition.

Frank Boyden, unlike the public school principals, had the power literally to dismiss any faculty member who opposed him. More often he simply let the offending party know he was no longer a desired member of the community.

None of the five dealt with conflict by avoiding it. Each was willing to stand by his or her beliefs and to take action. They believed they had the moral authority needed to find the best choice among conflicting values, and they were willing to exercise it. Each principal had his or her own style, but *they all shared a willingness to face and deal with conflicts.*

Setting a Consistent Example

A strong and perhaps decisive tactic was the extent to which these five leaders set a consistent example of the values they espoused for the school.

Hank Cotton was rarely seen without a book in hand, and he quoted liberally from his reading. He modeled self-development and responsibility for one's own academic achievement.

The consistency and depth of **Frances Hedges'** convictions were continually visible at her school. From picking up litter to praising outstanding student work, everything Hedges did expressed the values she sought to instill.

Bob Mastruzzi acted consistently upon his belief in open communication as a means for strengthening school unity. He was constantly listening to others, showing interest, and "touring" the school, in what some management experts have termed MBWA: "management by wandering around."

Ray Murdock not only created formal ceremonies to nurture specific values he held for his school, but he set a daily example by serving food in the cafeteria, repairing equipment himself (to save the money for academic resources), and helping individual students with their classwork.

Frank Boyden, too, set a visible example of acting on his beliefs. He was on the job from early in the morning to late in the evening, even at an advanced age. Every moment seemed to go into contact with faculty and students. Like Frances Hedges, he was often seen picking up a piece of litter or pulling up a weed on the lawn. And recall how he once set up his desk in a corridor, in order to get more contact with faculty and students.

Each of these school leaders had daily routines which expressed the same values that were verbally espoused and ceremonially recognized. The principal's values could be seen and felt throughout the school. It is common to hear that effective principals have high visibility, and these examples demonstrate it. Diverse and innovative methods earned visibility for these principals and their values. *They all relied on the consistency of their daily routines and concrete actions to model their values in an active and highly visible manner.*

Telling Stories

Storytelling is a special kind of modeling. It can show the listeners, the school community, what the principal values without direct moralizing.

Hank Cotton had a dozen "standard" stories, recognized by the school as such. They served as vicarious examples of specific values: hard work, struggle, and collaboration.

Bob Mastruzzi told stories illustrating academic and athletic success.

Frank Boyden often retold the story of his great hero, a former Deerfield student, athlete, faculty member, and war hero, Tom Ashley.

We do not have evidence whether Hedges and Murdock told favorite stories.

When used, stories about figures in the school can entertain, elaborate shared aspects of experience, and illustrate important, value-based aspects of the principal's vision.

Principals tell stories to illustrate what they value in the school. They spawn and spread stories that become "legends" and strengthen still further the cultural infrastructure.

Using Ceremonies, Traditions, Rituals, and Symbols

Ceremonies, traditions, rituals, and symbols are the more visible aspect of culture. They display the school's common values and shared beliefs in symbolic relief. They communicate in ways that are widely seen and easy to understand.

Graduation ceremonies bring the school community together and remind it of the values and vision that underlay the daily routines of schooling. Formal ceremonies may be potent opportunities to reaffirm commitment to the school's purposes and reinforce the behaviors the principal is trying to promote. Even the school mascot may remind students and faculty that they belong to a common enterprise.

Hank Cotton used the "bear" symbol of Cherry Creek constantly—on his jogging shoes, on the lapel pins he wore, even on his auto bumper sticker. He elevated old ceremonies, such as making the graduation ceremony more formal, and created a "tradition" (newly minted) of athletic achievement.

Frances Hedges did not focus her own energies on managing such formal and overt displays, but to show their appreciation of what she had done for Orchard Park, the school itself staged a formal ceremony to honor her. At a schoolwide assembly, poetry written for her was read aloud, and each class gave her a rose.

Bob Mastruzzi developed a tradition of collecting Christmas gifts for the needy to highlight the school value of helping the less fortunate. He put the attendance office in the counseling area to symbolize his belief that attendance was a critical academic, not just a disciplinary, issue.

Ray Murdock created numerous ceremonies and traditions to support the students and make the school a focus of community life: the annual Art Auction, the yearly Carnival, special days, and meeting with each child on his or her birthday.

Frank Boyden, wanting to avoid formalities that smacked of rules and regulations, designed instead many small rituals, such as distributing grades himself to each student personally. Indeed, he designed and structured much of what happened every day, moment-to-moment, so that most of the activities in the school had a ritualistic flavor.

Of course, ceremonies or traditions designed by the principal that are inconsistent with behavior will weaken rather than strengthen the school culture. Daily routines inconsistent with openly-stated ideals can demoralize the school community and smack of hypocrisy.

Ceremonies, traditions, rituals, and symbols represent both a means for building and strengthening culture *and* an expression of culture. This is illustrated by the surprise assembly put on to honor Frances Hedges. The ceremony was not just the principal's tactic for defining and strengthening the culture; it was in fact a heartfelt expression of the school culture that Hedges has succeeded in constructing.

To a greater or lesser extent, each of our five principals used formal cultural devices—rituals, ceremonies, traditions, and symbols—to help define, reinforce, or simply express the culture he or she was striving to construct.

Conclusion

One or more of the roles of principal as symbol, as potter, as poet, as actor, and as healer was played out in each of the five cases. Frances Hedges' dignity, careful

dress, and hard work symbolized her belief that the students she served could learn and succeed. Ray Murdock staged large and small dramas of renewal and was a star actor in what otherwise might have been a dispirited community.

These principals relied heavily on symbolic strategies and tactics to build effective school cultures. Not every principal used every tactic or played every role. Each one applied a particular tactic somewhat differently from the others. The school context was the main influence in determining what individual principals did.

All of them had a deep understanding of where their schools had been, were, and needed to go. Their success was determined primarily by an ability to read the culture of a school and to articulate a shared destiny.

Principals and Culture Building: The Task Ahead

Improving American schools has become a prominent national goal. In early 1990 the President of the United States and the 50 Governors announced the Nation's first set of national goals and reaffirmed a national commitment to work over the long term to raise standards of student achievement. Just as recent writers on American business have called for constant "renewal" in those organizations,[49] the President and Governors addressed educational improvement not as a one-shot, quick-fix but as a continuous process, involving all stakeholders in the Nation's schools.

If we are to succeed in this effort, schools will not simply respond to bureaucratic requirements or increase job satisfaction or cope with political pressures. They must look inside themselves to realize the potential embedded in their history and values. Principals will play a central role in identifying the link between the values and purposes in local schools and the larger needs national reform policies are attempting to address.

Admittedly, a principal's job goes beyond building strong symbolic unity. The administrative, instructional, curricular, and economic systems must also be working smoothly. Principals must make sure that buses are not late, classes are "covered" when teachers are absent, instructional materials and books are available, and that order prevails.

But establishing systems is not enough. As Admiral Carlisle N. Trost, Chief of Naval Operations, observed: "It's people, not systems, that win and deter wars."[50] The same principle applies to our efforts to foster learning and combat ignorance. Pricipals must build a shared sense of mission and a set of core beliefs, values, and norms with the people who make up any strong school community.

In cohesive school cultures, students, teachers, and administrators are more likely to feel emotional commitment to the school. But it is likely that other substantive outcomes such as student performance and attendance may be improved as well.

While the research on effective schools and the research on school culture have not yet been fully integrated, they are closely and deeply related. In this book we have tried to show how the technical side of school administration and the normative side of school leadership are two sides of the same coin, necessarily part of a single "whole" that defines the nature of principals' jobs.

Many of the concepts (if not the actual behavior) of symbolic leadership are new to principals. By making them explicit, we have tried to clarify how leaders can and do build a shared sense of meaning within a school community. While principals are not the only actors in shaping a positive culture, they do have a central and critically important role to play. It is the principals who work with others—teachers, students, and community members—who build truly strong and successful schools.

We have used a set of case studies to illustrate these ideas. It is our belief that many of the country's educational practitioners are applying symbolic concepts to improve schools. Through a few noteworthy examples we have tried to illustrate the range of opportunities for and obstacles to building effective cultures in American schools. Further research will help identify the diverse ways that school cultures evolve and the complex ways that principals shape them.

Nonetheless, we believe the leadership of principals is key to building a strong school culture. Principals must be able to both ***read*** and ***shape*** school cultures with the cooperation and support of teachers, students, and community members. The guidelines, as we have seen them, look something like this:

- Read the existing culture. Understand the inner workings of the school's history, values, and norms and reflect on their match with your own hopes and fears for the school;

- Identify the norms, values, and beliefs you want to reinforce, as well as those you want to change. Develop a deep sense of new elements that are needed;

- If change needs to be dramatic, make an explicit commitment that is known to others;
- Work with *all* the school's stakeholders to clarify the mission and purposes of the school;
- Reinforce the core values and norms of the school by consistently modeling; coaching; attending to detail; observing ceremonies, rituals, and traditions; and telling stories that identify heroes and heroines that all support the school's mission;
- Confront resistance; don't avoid or withdraw from it. Use conflicts to explain and signal the mission and values of the school;
- Highlight the priority of additional values and beliefs you seek to encourage that are not now prominent in the existing culture but that support a vision of the school's mission. Encourage deep structures that support those values and recognize those whose actions illustrate them;
- Recruit teachers and staff who share your view of the mission of the school and whose values and beliefs are consistent with those you are trying to establish;
- Encourage the potent school ceremonies and traditions that celebrate the purposes and goals of the school. Recognize and celebrate successes (both small and large) as often as possible, and involve all members of the school and community in doing so; and
- Keep track of what's going on. Regularly reevaluate the extent to which students, teachers, parents, and the community share a vision of the school's mission and the degree to which cultural patterns are mutually reinforcing and supportive of the school's mission.

Easy to say and hard to do. While writing such guidelines is simple, applying them is difficult and complex.

These tasks and activities take place within the day-to-day business of managing the school, running the building, and dealing with the daily problems that principals face.[51]

Symbolic leadership, like instructional leadership, adds a layer of meaning to the routines of the principal, part of the "buzzing, blooming confusion of (his) world." Is this possible? Yes. Is it easy? No. But as the five case studies show, symbolic leadership is a dimension of the work of principals—at times conscious and planned, at other times more intuitive—that helps give meaning within the school community to the other things they do.

By making symbols a central element of leadership, one does not ignore the needs and skills of individuals or set aside the development of objectives, the assignment of roles, the design of coordinated mechanisms, or the mediation of conflicts. Rather, one places these human, technical, and political elements of the school within a broader and more meaningful context—the larger context of the values and purposes of the school and its community.

Students, teachers, and administrators are more likely to perform well and feel committed to a school with a cohesive set of values. Symbolic leadership, combined with competent administration, therefore, forms a context for successful school reform and improvement. It allows national, State, and district policies to be discussed and interpreted in the light of what each school itself sees as its identity and mission. Even (and especially) if the match is imperfect, such discussion helps schools integrate their local sense of purpose with that of the larger community.

The principals who use such an approach stand the best chance of developing schools that give students the knowledge and skills they will need outside the local community to succeed in the world and workplace of the 21st century.

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20. This example was contributed by an elementary school principal from the Westchester, New York, Principals Center.

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24. This example was contributed by a district superintendent from Tennessee.

25. The motto is from the Edina (Minnesota) School District. It was developed through an extensive dialogue involving the entire school community. Ray Smith, Superintendent of Schools, initiated the process following the suicide of his predecessor, Dr. Roberta Block.

26. This example was shared by a middle school principal during a session at Harvard's Principals Institute.

27. Dr. Seldon Whitaker began this tradition in his first year as Superintendent of State College Area School District in State College, Pennsylvania.

28. This celebration was held at Concord High School in Concord, Massachusetts. One of the authors (Deal) attended this event.

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34. This example is based on the authors' confidential case notes.

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45. Op. cit., McPhee, 1966, p. 64.

46. Op. cit., p. 63.

47. Op. cit., p. 65.

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Organizational Culture and Leadership

The following two books provide indepth treatment of how leaders create, change, and manage their organizations' cultures. The treatments are general, applicable to all organizations, rather than specific to schools. The article by Firestone and Wilson places the cultural leadership argument in the school context.

Firestone, W. A., and Wilson, B. L. (1985). Using bureaucratic and cultural linkages to improve instruction: The principal's contribution. *Educational Administration Quarterly*. 21 (2), 7–30.

The authors argue that principals can influence instruction by working through the linkages that govern teacher behavior. What these linkages are, how they affect instruction, and the impact of the principal on them are the focus of the article. Two kinds of linkages are identified and distinguished: bureaucratic and cultural. Past research focused almost exclusively on bureaucratic linkages without analyzing cultural linkages. It is argued that the principals have access to linkages of both kinds and that the principal's task is to consistently employ the full range of linkages through many major and minor actions that generate common purpose in the school. The bureaucratic linkage side is similar to what the leadership literature now calls "transactional leadership" or, sometimes, "management," while cultural linkages are built and work through transformational leadership. What is unique to the argument presented here is the authors' view that effective principals do *both*, are not merely transformational leaders but use bureaucratic transactions, as well, as part of their comprehensive culture-building strategy for improving school effectiveness and student outcomes.

Schein, E. H. (1985). *Organizational culture and leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schein provides a model for understanding organizational culture and the role of leaders in creating, chang-

ing, and maintaining the culture. He approaches this from three viewpoints: organizational theory, social–organizational psychology, and anthropology. Schein argues that leadership and culture management are so central to understanding organizations and making them effective that we cannot afford to be complacent about either one. Culture is defined by the pattern of deep and basic assumptions that come to be shared at an unstated and often unconscious level, among the members of a social group or organization. These assumptions are reflected in more easily identified values, which in turn relate to even more superficial physical artifacts and social conventions (e.g., norms of behavior). Understanding of a culture, particularly the values and deep beliefs and assumptions that underly and define the culture, can only be attained through "clinical" study by a skilled organizational scientist, in Schein's view. The actual creation and shaping of a culture, by a leader, is so difficult in his view as to be often unsuccessful. He proposes, however, five major ways in which leaders shape cultures:

(1) What they pay attention to;

(2) What they measure and control;

(3) How they recruit and select;

(4) Direct role modeling; and

(5) Use of stories of success.

Despite his belief about the extreme difficulty associated with the successful creation and shaping of cultures, Schein notes that creating and shaping cultures may be the only really important function of leaders.

Sergiovanni, T. J., and Corbally, J. E. (Eds.) (1984). *Leadership and organizational culture: New perspectives on administrative theory and practice*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

The editors present a collection of essays based on papers delivered at a national conference. The papers depict various aspects of organizational culture and examine different leadership approaches that give atten-

tion to the organization's culture. Comparisons are also made between attributes of public and of private organizations.

Leadership

The following books constitute an up-to-date list of materials that center on "transformational" leadership, that is, leadership that "transforms" people and organizations into improved and superior forms capable of the highest level of achievement. This is to be distinguished from the traditional use of the term leadership, which generally refers to the supervision of employees and the administration of rewards for "contracted" performance behaviors.

Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. New York: Free Press.

Bass attempts to integrate the work of political scientists and psychohistorians such as James McGregor Burns (see below) with that of social–organizational psychologists like himself. He applies to the organization Burns' notion of transformational leadership, and its alternative, transactional leadership. These concepts were developed by Burns in his study of national and international leaders such as Ghandi and Roosevelt. Bass reports how he developed tools to investigate transformational leadership in organizations and describes his results in terms of who these leaders are, how they get results, and why those results of transformational leadership in organizations often exceed all expectations.

Bennis, W. G. (1989). *On becoming a leader*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Bennis' latest book on leadership is focused on lessons from the experience of exceptional leaders, rather than on theory. He reports the results of interviews with more than two dozen leaders in all walks of life (e.g., Norman Lear, John Scully, and Gloria Steinem). Bennis' aim is to extract from these sessions the "how" of leadership and leading. The 10 chapters have titles like "Knowing the World," "Operating on Instinct," "Deploying Yourself," and "Forging the Future." One aim of the

book is to help potential leaders begin to understand themselves better, and to identify what they must do to develop themselves into successful leaders.

Bennis, W. G., and Nanus, B. (1985). *Leaders: The strategies for taking charge*. New York: Harper and Row.

Leadership is seen as the pivotal force which mobilizes and causes success in organizations. Leadership has a critical position in the organization, demonstrated by the authors through numerous examples that show how leaders commit people to action, convert followers into leaders, and make themselves into agents of organizational change and improvement. Like Bass and like Burns, Bennis and Nanus focus on the concept of transformational leadership, identifying four specific strategies used by such leaders to design and construct the "social architecture" of organizations.

Burns, J. McG. (1978). *Leadership*. New York: Harper and Row.

In this monumental (and Pulitzer Prize winning) work on leadership, Burns addresses the crisis in leadership at the national level by focusing on the difference between transformative (or transformational) and transactional leadership. He begins by examining power and purpose, distinguishing between followership and leadership, and dealing with the sources of values. The transformational leader—a Ghandi or a Roosevelt, for example—transforms both followers (often into leaders) and whole societies. Using detailed case examples Burns defines transformational leadership and shows how it operates. He concludes with implications for leadership in terms of both theory and practice. Burns' argument is made at the social system and whole society level, rather than in terms of specific public or private organizations; it is others (such as Bass and Bennis) who have applied Burns' ideas at the organizational level.

De Pree, M. (1989). *Leadership is an art*. New York: Doubleday.

The author is chief executive of Herman Miller, manufacturer of high-quality office furniture. De Pree is an exceptional transformational leader (as is detailed and

demonstrated in a recent video interview with Warren Bennis). Even more unusual is De Pree's comprehension of what he does as a leader and his ability to explain clearly the nature of his actions and aims.

Gardner, J. (1989). *On leadership*. New York: Free Press.

John Gardner, the well-known founder of Common Cause, has, over the past decade, published a number of brief pamphlets on leadership. This book integrates his ideas on leadership, in the context of a set of interviews with contemporary leaders.

Levinson, H., and Rosenthal, S. (1984). *CEO: Corporate leadership in action*. New York: Basic Books.

This treatise on organizational leadership demonstrates how six well-known leaders in established American corporations led their firms in new directions while, at the same time, maintaining their organizations' strong identities. Levinson takes a Freudian, or "psychodynamic," view of organizational leadership, emphasizing the influence of historical (especially childhood) developmental processes on adult CEOs' behaviors but also showing how Freudian processes operate in the organizational context.

Peters, T. J., and Austin, N. (1985). *A passion for excellence: The leadership difference*. New York: Random House.

Building on the senior author's earlier, well-known book *In Search of Excellence*, the focus in this one is on the day-to-day leadership actions at every management level that are required for organizational excellence. In particular, the authors examine the "basics" of success: pride in one's organization and enthusiasm for the work; listening to the customer; a focus on the quality of the service or product, especially as seen from the customer's viewpoint; employee commitment and sense of ownership; internal corporate entrepreneurship; championing; trust; and vision. Part Five is devoted to excellence in leadership, with Chapter 21 focused exclusively on school leadership.

Zaleznik, A. (1989). *The managerial mystique*. New York: Edward Burlingame/Harper & Row.

Zaleznik was one of the first to make a clear and strong distinction between managers and leaders, in his classic Harvard Business Review article, "Managers and Leaders: Are They Different?" In this book, Zaleznik expands on and updates his 1977 argument with extensive case illustrations and examples. He argues against the widespread "managerial mystique," in which managers strive to deal with process, not content, and to be as anonymous as possible, fading into a group that is really a "lonely crowd." In this manner, managers cannot be held responsible for organizational problems and failures. Zaleznik gives a devastating indictment of this anti-excellence "ethic," the managerial mystique, and explicates in depth and detail its dynamics.

School Leadership

The following books and articles explore new concepts of school leadership, based on the more generally applicable notions of transformational leadership as detailed in the books cited above.

Blumberg, A., and Greenfield, W. (1986). *The effective principal: Perspectives on school leadership*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Eight cases of successful principals are presented in this book on effective school leaders. Although the principals use different styles, they are equally effective in their problem-solving and leadership efforts. The book includes the principals' own reports of their lives in schools as well as the authors' elaboration and interpretation. Each chapter in Part One is titled after the presumed leadership "style" of the principal: organizer, value-based juggler, authentic helper, broker, humanist, catalyst, rationalist, and politician. Various interpretations and implications for each type are presented.

Bogue, E. G. (1985). *The enemies of leadership: Lessons for leaders in education*. Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.

Drawing on management and leadership research, this book is centered on the question, "What exactly do we mean when we say that leadership is effective or ineffective?" Echoed in the book is the theme that leadership is an art form, and one of the prime characteristics of effective leadership is personal integrity.

Cunningham, L. (1985). Leaders and leadership: 1985 and beyond. *Phi Delta Kappan*. 67(1), 17–20.

"We can create our own leaders," says Luvern Cunningham. He goes on to describe seven important leadership skills. Among the seven is the management of symbols. Cunningham suggests that principals will need to be aware of the "flow of images" (signals) that are a part of organizational leadership. He admonishes principals to recognize the importance of the symbolic aspects of leadership and reminds them that "Aspiring educational leaders often fail to anticipate this dimension of leadership; they do not fully understand the symbolic value and thus tend to overlook crucial details."

Dwyer, D. C. (Ed.) (1986). The principal as instructional leader. *Peabody Journal of Education*. 63(1), Fall.

This special issue contains 11 papers by various, well-known researchers and scholars, all exploring the leadership role of the school principal. All of the papers rely on case report data, which is in several instances used as the basis for detailed quantitative analysis as well as for theoretical discussion and the inference of broader insights about school leaders. Most of the case material is drawn from a series of intensive case studies of school principals conducted at OERI's Far West Regional Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, as part of the Instructional Management Program directed by Dwyer. Most of the papers here were the outgrowth of a conference held at Stanford in fall 1985, as the research program came to a close.

Morris, V. C., Crowson, R. L., Porter-Gehrie, C., and Hurwitz, E., Jr. (1984). *Principals in action: The reality of managing schools*. Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill.

Within the context of rich descriptions of principals' activities, the authors reinforce and solidify a number of important themes about school administration. In an era when many are searching for simplicity and the "one best way," these authors remind us of the multifaceted role of the principal. Through examples and discussion, the authors discuss the variety of ways in which administrators influence activities in their schools, using a wide array of personal, bureaucratic, and environmental strategies. The focus of the book is on "discretionary principaling behavior" and the writers contribute perspectives about the nature of organizational couplings and linkages in schools.

Rutherford, W. L. (1985). School principals as effective leaders. *Phi Delta Kappan*. 67(1), 31–34.

Based on data collected from observations of and interviews with principals, teachers, and key central staff members, Rutherford detected distinctive differences between more-effective and less-effective principals. Five essential facts were identified. These qualities suggest that effective principals: (1) have clear, informed visions of what they want their schools to become; (2) translate these visions into goals for their schools and expectations for teachers, students, and administrators; (3) establish school climates that support progress toward these goals and expectations; (4) continuously monitor progress; and (5) intervene in a supportive or corrective manner when that seems necessary. Effective leaders behave, of course, in varying ways while demonstrating these common characteristics.

Sergiovanni, T. M. (1987). *The principalship: A reflective practice perspective*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

This may be the first textbook on educational administration to be written from the "transformational leadership" perspective. Sergiovanni bases his arguments and advice on the "effective schools" research literature as well as the work of Bennis and others who have studied and written about transformational leadership and the culture-building role of leaders. Sergiovanni begins with an examination of the central importance of the

principalship for school success, goes on to show how principals define and develop their schools' missions, examines principals' roles as they relate to teaching and supervision, reviews the role of the principal in staff and school development, and, finally, focuses explicitly on how school leaders build cultures of excellence. This is an exceptional, cutting-edge book that does not merely raise new ideas but puts them into a hands-on practice context.

Sheive, L. T., and Schoenheit, M. B. (1987). *Leadership: Examining the elusive.* (1987 Yearbook of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.) Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

This book consists of a series of papers by various well-known authors (including, for example, Deal, Dwyer, and Sergiovanni). Its major thrust includes looking at the less-studied sides of leadership. The papers are organized into three areas: (1) organizational perspectives on the work of leaders; (2) personal perspectives on the work of leaders; and, (3) perspectives on the development of leaders. Through investigation of school culture, indepth cases of principals' lives, and various topics dealing with vision and leadership, this book provides some interesting ideas for practicing administrators.

Organizational Culture

There are a number of recent books dealing with organizational culture, but most are concerned with esoteric academic issues, often debating such topics as phenomenology versus logical positivism. The following books focus on understanding organizational culture from a pragmatic point of view.

Bolman, L., and Deal, T. E. (1984). *Modern approaches to understanding and managing organizations.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

The authors present four major approaches for understanding what goes on in organizations. Each approach helps, in a different way, to understand the dynamics of

action in organizations. The first approach is to take a structural–bureaucratic perspective. The second involves the political perspective. A third way of looking at and making sense of what happens in organizations is the human resource perspective. Finally, the fourth way to look at organizations involves taking a symbolic perspective, in order to "decode" the culture. Thus, organizations can be viewed as structures, as human resource systems, as political assemblies, or as symbolic cultures. Each perspective gives somewhat different—and added—insights. For each perspective the authors describe the literature, offer examples of the perspective in action, and propose possible alternatives for managers who see the organization through that particular "framework" of understanding. Unique to this book is the emphasis on the symbolic role of the leader. By presenting this role in conjunction with the other three, Bolman and Deal help leaders broaden their leadership capabilities for dealing with the complexities of leading and leadership. With such a broadened perspective, a leader will be better able to serve as a "culture medium."

Davis, S. M. (1984). *Managing corporate culture.* Cambridge, MA: Ballinger.

This book is based on the author's first-hand experiences working with companies as they manage and change their cultures. Culture is defined by Davis as "the pattern of shared beliefs and values that give the members of an institution meaning and provide them with the rules for behavior in their organization." He discusses cultural realities and offers suggestions for managers who are engaged in organizational change and development. Davis identifies some pitfalls for leaders to avoid, providing several important reasons for paying attention to the organization's culture.

Deal, T. E., and Kennedy, A. A. (1982). *Corporate cultures: The rites and rituals of corporate life.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Culture is at the heart of any organization, be it an ancient tribe or a modern corporation. Deal and Kennedy take the reader to this organizational core through their insightful presentation of culture and its im-

plications for organizational maintenance and change. The book provides a basis for understanding organizational culture through a description of the values, heros, rites, rituals, and cultural network active in any organization. It also provides an opportunity for putting culture into practice through a presentation of ways to identify, diagnose, manage, and change cultures.

School Culture

These two articles by Deal represent the most current explicit treatment of organizational culture in schools.

Deal, T. E. (1985). The symbolism of effective schools. *The Elementary School Journal.* 85(5), 601–619.

The author articulates a strategy for raising productivity in schools, with numerous ideas for rebuilding or reshaping the school's culture. He warns that the effective schools movement can "collapse under its own weight" unless educators are cognizant of the culture in which change is to occur. Deal provides the necessary background on the effective schools and policymaking literature. He then compares effective school correlates with elements witnessed in strong cultures. Leaders are urged to pay attention to and appreciate shared beliefs and values, heros and heroines, rituals, ceremonies, stories, and the "cast" of the informal cultural network.

Deal, T. E. (1987). The culture of schools. In L. T. Sheive and M. B. Schoenheit (Eds.), *Leadership: Examining the elusive.* (1987 Yearbook of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.) (3–15). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

In this essay the author emphasizes the importance of understanding school culture and offers some ways to reform and revitalize the culture of schools. He suggests that the history of the school be recreated, that shared values be articulated, that heros be celebrated and "annointed," and that rituals and ceremonies be reinvigorated. Deal further recommends that good stories be told and that the informal network of cultural players be recognized, appreciated, and involved. He reminds

school leaders to look inside themselves for answers to problems and to not be seduced by simplistic or prescriptive practices accompanying some of the recent educational reform movement ideas.

Related OERI Publications and Programs

Principal Selection Guide
Source: Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402–9325; stock # 065–000–00300–7; cost $1.75.

Becoming a Nation of Readers: What Principals Can Do
Source: National Association of Elementary School Principals, Educational Products Center, 1615 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314–3483; cost $2.00.

Documents have been produced by and about the 57 State programs of the Leadership in Educational Administration Development (LEAD) program administered by OERI. For further information, contact:

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Documents have also been produced by two of OERI's Research and Development Centers which focus on topics of school leadership:

National Center for Educational Leadership
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Urbana, IL 61801
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Biographies

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Kent D. Peterson is Director of the National Center for Effective Schools Research and Development at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research, University of Wisconsin–Madison, where he is also Associate Professor of Educational Administration. Dr. Peterson has written extensively for researchers and practitioners in such publications as *Educational Leadership, Educational Administration Quarterly, Administrative Science Quarterly,* and *Theory Into Practice*. His research, often conducted as observational studies of educators or through intensive interviews, attempts to understand the ways leaders think, act, and shape effective school cultures. His work is widely used for training school improvement leaders throughout the United States and in Europe.

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